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DEEP SEA DAYS

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OFF THE HORN.

(*Frontispiece.*)

(See Chapter II.)

DEEP SEA DAYS

THE CHRONICLES OF A SAILOR AND SEA PAINTER

BY

THOMAS M. HEMY

WITH TWELVE SKETCHES BY THE AUTHOR

LONDON
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PREFACE

In the following pages I have endeavoured to give a veracious description of life at sea in the days of the sailing ship, based largely on my own experiences between the years 1866–70. There is no attempt at embroidery or exaggeration—none is needed, for here, as in other spheres, truth is stranger and more forcible than fiction.

Should there be any little technical slips in my text, I must crave the indulgence of any hypercritical sailorman who may detect them, and plead that in the course of over fifty years much in this way may be forgotten.

For obvious reasons most of the names of ships and men are purely fictitious. As yet there are but few people of the mentality of the little girl who asked her teacher to include a visit to Madame Tussaud's in a promised Sunday School treat, "'cos she'd got an uncle in the Chamber of 'Orrors."

T.M.H.

To

LADY GLANUSK

A TRIBUTE TO A CHARMING

PERSONALITY

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INTRODUCTION

My personal acquaintance with the sea commenced somewhat early in life.

One mournful day, when the good ship *Madawaska* was making her way in the Atlantic bound for Australia, there appeared a small addition to the passenger list who might, or might not be termed a stowaway. His advent caused some little excitement amongst the other passengers, but no resentment was shown by the genial Captain Pascoe at this attempt to avoid paying the fare. There was no clergyman on board, so, as with funerals, marriages, trials, and the award of punishments, christenings were amongst the captain's unpaid duties. In this case, however, as my father was a member of the Church of Rome, and partly responsible for the addition to the passenger list, he thought himself justified in taking the matter of the christening into his own hands.

The results showed what amateurs can be capable of when they butt in—I, the unfortunate

victim, was first deluged with water—salt, presumably, as fresh water in those days, on long-voyage passenger ships, was a valuable commodity; and then the cruel parent, taking advantage of the helplessness of his child, tacked the name of the ship on to the others with which he adorned him. It could hardly be called a Christian name—though it was not, as might be thought, a Russian or Polish one; it was the name of a river in Canada. The remonstrances of my mother prevented him from adding the name of the captain also. But worse was to follow, for one of the passengers, with an eye to my future discomfiture, wrote a " poem " on the event, which commenced " Hail, Madawaska, child of the sea." I remember it because it was recited at a concert given by my father somewhere or other—a few years later—and it seemed to me then as though it might have been sawn out of wood—made up out of the author's own head in fact.

In the days of wind-jammers one sometimes heard an old shellback say to a youngster of sea-going intentions, " Go to sea for pleasure and—go to hell for pastime." It was no longing for pleasure took me there—I mean, of course, to sea—nothing indeed but pure cussedness, or it may have been hereditary instinct: the brand

that causes the gosling just out of its shell to make tracks for the water.

I was studying art before this brain-storm occurred. An uncle, Isaac Henzell by name, a well-known artist in his time—had retired from London to end his days in his native town, Newcastle-on-Tyne. We were then living at North Shields, and my uncle would occasionally take "a busman's holiday," and run down to our house to give me valuable tuition. But I became "fed up" with art, and had an overwhelming craving to breathe my native air, or visit my birthplace. So with some considerable trouble, I managed to get my father's consent. After all, it was merely the family routine, for there were already four of my elder brothers going through with it, in different parts of the world. My father himself had been there in his youth, before he settled down to music, and earned unenviable notoriety as the champion persecutor of helpless childhood with his "Modern Pianoforte Tutor" that, for some fifty years or so, secured the unuttered—I hope—curses of its youthful victims in all parts of the Empire. My elder brother, C. Napier Hemy, R.A., also had a spell at sailoring up the Mediterranean, but it was hardly appreciated by him, and in answer to an urgent S.O.S. the fare for his passage

home was sent to him at some port up this sea. Later on, two of the younger boys were afflicted in the same way—they just had to go! That's all there is to say about it. Some seafaring ancestor must take the blame.

A friend of my father's was a shipowner, and to his office I was taken duly to be apprenticed and indentured. I think there was a private understanding that if I regained my senses with my first trip, my indentures would be cancelled. One gloomy day, therefore, I took my way down to the good barque *Standish*, then lying off North Shields, after loading coal at one of the staithes up the river. When I arrived, I was nicely attired in the usual shore garb of the day—tail coat, white linen, bowler hat, etc., and on stepping over the rail was greeted with a grin by a begrimed individual, black with coal dust from head to foot. He had a shovel in his hand which he thrust into mine, when I announced that I was the new apprentice. "Now," he said, "we'll proceed to take the shine out of those nice clothes of yours, so you'll get to work shovelling the coal off the deck into those hatches, see?" And I saw; saw a deck heaped with coal in every direction; saw also other men shovelling: saw stores, provisions, new ropes, sails, etc., heaped aft, and every-

where, aloft and alow, heavy layers of coal dust. When I stretched my aching back for the last time—after taking part in battening down the hatches and being drenched many times with the hose which was washing the filthy deck, I returned home to spend the last evening there for nine months. As I walked through the streets—looking like a badly wrung-out clout which had been used for washing the coal-cellar floor—I was the proudest and happiest lad in the world. I was a real sailor, doing man's work, and had my feet on the threshold of a world of strange countries and romantic adventures.

Here I might draw attention to some of the advantages that were obtained before the days of steam and wireless. The long voyages with many months of freedom from the worrying evils of civilised life; no letters received or sent; no duns, no visits from poor relations in search of sympathetic ears—and the results of their "touching" appeals; the escape from the tyranny of the daily newsmonger. In a way we enjoyed the privileges of the inmates of our latter day "Hostels for the care of the Victims of Moral Ineptitude"—which some coarse-minded people, mostly aged, still persist in calling jails. There were wooden walls in place

of those of stone, but our movements were equally circumscribed; the captain and officers represented the governor and the warders. Their disciplinary powers, however, were far in excess of those of the prison authorities, and there were no visiting justices to listen to complaints of the victims. As to the food, I'm afraid that if the fare of the "old timers" were to be prescribed for our "Ineptitudes" their publicity agents would be on the warpath throughout the country with much outcry of "man's inhumanity to man."

Grousing was, is, and ever will be the privilege—nay, right—of the seafarer, be he Lord High Admiral or cabin-boy; it is as food and drink to him, but there is no question that when ships *sailed* the Seven Seas there were more solid grounds for a grouse than there are in these days of steam or motor-driven vessels. There is, for instance, the matter of medical attention. The skipper was responsible for the health of his men, and had the doling out of "medical comforts." One captain I knew—Captain Bradley, of whom more will be told later—won a well-deserved reputation in the bone-setting line. I once saw him tackle a man who had fallen from up aloft and dislocated his arm; he was lying on the deck, and the skipper getting

a firm hold of the arm, placed one foot against the man's body and had the arm back in its socket in a jiffy. I will not aver that some little medical treatment didn't follow, but I state with confidence that it would take the shape of a good dose of Epsom salts, for this was the nautical remedy for sprains, bruises, cholera, scarlet fever, and, in fact, for everything except "surgery" cases. It had the advantage of being very inexpensive, so was put on board vessels in those days by the hundred-weight; other medicines, on the contrary, were doled out microscopically. Generally, in fact, there was always one or another either altogether lacking or exhausted. It was not every skipper who had the savvy of the one we've all heard about, who, when say, No. 7 compartment was empty, would mix the contents of Nos. 4 and 3 or 5 and 2 together, which although ingenious, would hardly meet with the approval of Harley Street!

I am reminded of the skipper of a fine vessel which sailed between England and Australia, who made it his hobby to prepare for the possibility of being cast away in an open boat in a waterless condition. This he did at a great amount of severe training and discomfort, and at last managed to achieve his purpose, and could and would do without liquid for days on

stretch. But, alas, his fortitude and sufferings were futile; he never was cast away, and his ships were never waterless; and he eventually died of dropsy! Surely sufficient cause for a good grouse!

But after all is said and done, I have deep sympathy with the man who informed the magistrate before whom he appeared, that the only peaceful time he'd passed for two years were three months he'd spent in Pentonville!

Hence my pleasure in thus setting down this record of my peaceful years.

CHAPTER I

SOME EARLY EXPERIENCES

THERE is a yarn related concerning an ancient mariner, who, on being interrogated as to the most wonderful thing he'd seen in the course of his half-century's sea-voyaging, replied, after a moment or two's hesitation: "A public house at Cairo!"

This old tar's visibility must have been very low indeed! 'Twere easier to have understood such a reply coming from one of our present-day steamship sailors, of that variety who journey from port to port—keeping time with the same regularity as do the motor buses which ply between—say, Putney and the Bank.

It is indeed astonishing to know what some people consider the most wonderful thing they've met with in their journey through life; a friend of mine declared in his case it was a railway porter who refused a tip; a tip that was quite large in proportion to the size of the portmanteau. He added that he often wondered if it were only a lapse on the young man's part,

and if not, what would have happened had his conduct come to the knowledge of his fellow porters?

My own experiences have been somewhat different from the foregoing. During my early days at sea I came across so many wonderful things—at least, they were so to me—that it would be difficult to make a selection of one of them to place at the summit; it was my luck to meet what is vulgarly described as "hot stuff," though at times it was actually very cold indeed.

My first voyage, which took me up the Mediterranean, was somewhat uneventful, but compared with my last, made in the same direction as a passenger on board a steamer, it was full of thrilling romance.

In this great inland sea I made the acquaintance of many strange craft, particularly so in periods of calm, for then they foregathered in numbers. It was indeed, quite a large fleet that we found ourselves amongst eastward of Gibraltar. There, drifting together in every direction, were vessels that included a smart Aberdeen clipper, an assortment of British colliers of varied rigs and sizes; Greek, Turkish, Spanish and Italian ships were all represented; and one or two were suggestive of the Noah's Ark style of naval architecture. Then were the

tongues of our crew let loose—in praise or abuse, which not only included the ships, but the different firms whose house-flags could be identified—and I listened with all ears to a great deal of mariners' scandal.

For instance, that brig on the port bow belonged to "Coffin-ship" Barker; the Shoreham schooner was the finest sailor out of that port, but her crew was half-starved, and the last skipper got penal servitude for manslaughter, and so on. Not only could they spot the nationality of many of the vessels around us, but could tell where they were built. The old sailors' memory in this direction was really marvellous. But one night a brisk breeze sprang up, and lo! in the morning there was but a sail or two on the horizon to remind us of this international fleet.

It is remarkable that much the same experience may be met in connexion with sea birds, for although the albatrosses and Mother Carey's chickens are with you blow high or blow low—it is seldom out at sea that other species are seen, except in a dead calm. I can recollect witnessing, in the South Atlantic I think it was, such a gathering of birds of various species. I looked at them long, with wonder and admiration; as they glided on the oily undulating

surface of the ocean they seemed to be going through a series of quaint manœuvres that suggested a quadrille—bowing and curtseying, setting to partners, then swinging round each other and changing partners. However, when our cook sauntered aft and emptied a bucket of swill amongst them, all order disappeared, and the feathers began to fly.

It was in 1866 that I made the acquaintance of Brindisi, and there we discharged our cargo of coal by the method known as "whipping." In one of Whistler's finest etchings the artist depicted this process, which lends itself admirably to picturesque representation, also to blisters on the hands, and occasionally to severe bodily shocks; on the other hand, as training for the treadmill—then in vogue in our jails—it was splendid.

Most of us know the thrill experienced on making a first acquaintance with a foreign land; it is one that is never forgotten, but is difficult to describe. My memory takes me back to a town of rackety old buildings with the ground floor often an open arch, which served as a shop, the only kind that existed. To a people who looked supremely happy and care-free; all, except the monks and priests, were clad in white and blue cotton or linen garments, in different

stages of dilapidation; also a long line of convicts who, chained together, passed us twice daily on their way from their work in the harbour, where they were employed in laying the foundations of the great port of call for the present day liners; these poor wretches made a melancholy spectacle. When we woke in the mornings we were often greeted by operatic songs, mostly Verdi's, sung, and sung capitally, by the fishermen, leaving the harbour for the open sea at daybreak.

Leaving Brindisi we made our way to Odessa, there to load grain; what a contrast the city was then to when I saw it some fifteen years ago!

In 1866 it was more or less primitive, but when I saw it again it was a magnificent city. Yet it suggested to me that it was a city of fear; there was a hunted and frightened look in the eyes of most of the people I met, why, I do not know, but the place depressed me utterly and I was glad to leave it.

Here it was that I witnessed the first of many dramatic episodes that have come my way. One day, whilst lying in our boat off the mole just outside some others, which were attached to the quay, I espied a numerous mob, evidently quay labourers, coming fast from the town in my

direction; ahead of them, running as if for life, came a man, whom I guessed was an English or an American seaman. From the expression on his face, and the howls of the following crowd, I surmised that he was in extreme peril. As the hunted man came flying along, and was nearly opposite to where my boat lay, he caught sight of me and, stooping down, clutched one of the ropes at his feet, swiftly lowered himself into the nearest boat, and jumped from one to the other, until he finally leapt into mine; as he did so, I gave the nearest boat a vigorous shove with my oar and swung clear. It was done not a bit too soon, for some of the Russians had followed him across the boats, and one was about to jump after him into mine, but the distance was too great. Pursuit was out of the question, there were no oars in any of the other boats. Without saying a word, my unexpected visitor seized an oar, and in a short time we were out of sight of the crowd amongst the shipping. At a nod from the stranger, we made for an American barque, on gaining which he seized the accommodation ladder, and disappeared from my view. He had not spoken a single word—not even a "thank you"—and I never knew the beginning of the adventure, which for him, had so nearly ended in disaster.

Whilst lying at Odessa my attention was called to an old-fashioned, full-rigged ship, anchored some little distance away, by hearing that her name was "*Madawaska.*" It was an uncommon name and, if it was not the vessel on which I was born some sixteen years earlier, it was a curious coincidence that I should meet another of the same name. If it was she, then the coincidence was still more noteworthy that, on my first trip to sea as a sailor, I should thus meet the ship in which I was first cradled on the deep.

One afternoon there occurred another exciting episode. A member of our crew had deserted, but had sent on board to fill his place a very evil-looking man, whom I thought might possibly be wanted by the police ashore, and had bribed our man to allow him to act as substitute. Anyhow, none of us liked him. This fellow, apparently, had in some way or other come to loggerheads with "Chips" (carpenter), who was a very hard lot indeed. I saw the latter rushing full pelt round the deck after the stranger; in his right hand was an adze. Round and round they went, no one daring to intervene. We had no cargo aboard and the main hatches were off. "Chip's" prospective victim took a big risk—he sprang for the combings of the hatch, and without a moment's hesitation let himself

drop into the hold. He was not a second too soon, for as he let go, the carpenter, with "murder" plainly written on his face, stood ready to strike. Luckily he escaped serious injury from his fall. We stowed him away until night-time, then got him safely ashore. We were glad to be rid of him. I think he was either a Greek or Armenian, both of whom had a very bad reputation in those days—even as they have now, among those who frequent the Levant.

The weather by this time had turned bitterly cold, and we gave up washing decks, as they became a mass of ice almost immediately.

Loading grain in bulk in those days was a terrible operation, particularly when the work was nearing completion. You then found yourself lying on your back with a scoop in the hand engaged in filling up every nook and corner under the deck beams, the while a steady stream of grain and stifling dust poured down the shoots. It was an awful task, with suffocation only partly prevented by wearing cloths over the nose and mouth; hæmorrhage of the head often followed.

Before parting from Odessa, I must mention one incident which may prove a tax on the credulity of the reader; but, with my hand on my heart, I declare it to be true!

One day I had occasion to leave a note from our captain on board a ship some distance away. As I handed it to a man who came down the accommodation ladder to receive it, I noticed that he squinted. That in itself was nothing remarkable in those days; nor did I consider it so when I noticed the same defect in the eyes of a sailor who was engaged up the rigging. But when one of the ship's officers came to the gangway to hand me an answer to the letter I had taken, I saw that he too was "boss-eyed." I marvelled thereat, and pondering the while, evolved the following possible (?) explanation. The captain undoubtedly also had a squint, and resolving that he would not be an object for mirth on board his own vessel, had with much labour gathered together a crew who were all similarly afflicted. This idea I enlarge upon in the yarn, "The Cross-eyed Crew," which is given later in this book.

In spite of all our care the cargo shifted in the Black Sea, where we were severely pounded during a gale, which involved delay in Constantinople whilst we retrimmed the ship. Before quitting the Black Sea, too, we drove into a thick fog such as is very prevalent there in winter, and at once were inundated with flocks of tired and hungry birds, who, caught by the

fog in their migrating passage, found the ship a veritable harbour of refuge.

Many years later, under very different conditions, for I was then a sick passenger on board a steamer, I had a similar experience near the same locality. One morning, on coming on deck, I found we were in a dense fog. There was the strange spectacle of a number of hawks and doves perched side by side up aloft, with divers other species of birds for company. That same night I was sitting lateish in the cabin; the lamp was lit and one of our skylights was partly open. Underneath this was a brass rod on which was suspended a curtain which had been drawn back. Presently, to my astonishment, a number of sand-martins flew into the cabin through an open port-hole, and proceeded to settle on the brass rod; there they sat and fought and quarrelled for position all night. Shortly after their arrival I lifted my eyes and saw a black paw stretched through the opening above the birds—one of which was clutched and disappeared like lightning. Very soon the paw reappeared and another bird vanished. In my sleepy condition I could not but watch fascinated, and wonder what evil thing was at work. Presently, however, I saw a baneful gleam of green eyes, and I knew that the ship's cat was

the owner of the devilish black paw. I prevented further tragedy by closing the skylight, and, leaving my noisy feathered visitors to their battling, I sought my sleeping berth.

In the morning the sand-martins had all disappeared by the same way as they had arrived, for the fog had now cleared, and the land was in sight. On going on deck, I found a considerable number of feathers, and realised that tragedy had been enacted there also. The previous afternoon the cook had gone aloft and captured some green jays, and to make sure of keeping them had clipped their wings short, and with a supply of food and water had loosed them on deck. There were only two survivors; all that was left of the others were the feathers; they had, apparently, restored the vigour of the hawks, who had evidently dined well.

Now that I'm in the bird line, I might as well include the following incident, particularly as it occurred on board the same steamship. The skipper had purchased at Odessa a number of geese. I think his chief idea was that he would be able to sell them in England at a good profit, and, perhaps, provide supplementary fare for the cabin table. The latter idea was soon dispelled, however. The first goose that was

cooked settled that point for it was as leather, both as to taste and tenacity.

When we were somewhere off the coast of Morocco, which was only three or four miles away, the geese, which were confined in one of the boats on the bridge deck, began to be greatly excited, quacking loudly and rushing about. Presently one of them emerged from under the boat-cover; and was quickly followed by the others, and they stood for a while gazing landwards, and kicking up a tremendous hulla-balloo; as though they were having a heated argument. Then, as if definitely making up his mind, the bird which had first appeared, spread his wings and flew down on the water. The others immediately followed their leader, and the last we saw of them they were gaily making their way to the Moorish coast.

To return to our yarn. We at length completed the retrimming of cargo, and with the aid of much timber had it, as we thought, properly in order. We left the Bosphorus in somewhat foggy weather, and as there was little or no wind we made but slow progress through the Sea of Marmora. The fog, indeed, became thicker and thicker, and on the following day we bumped ashore. We could only see but a few yards from the vessel, so could not tell at all where we

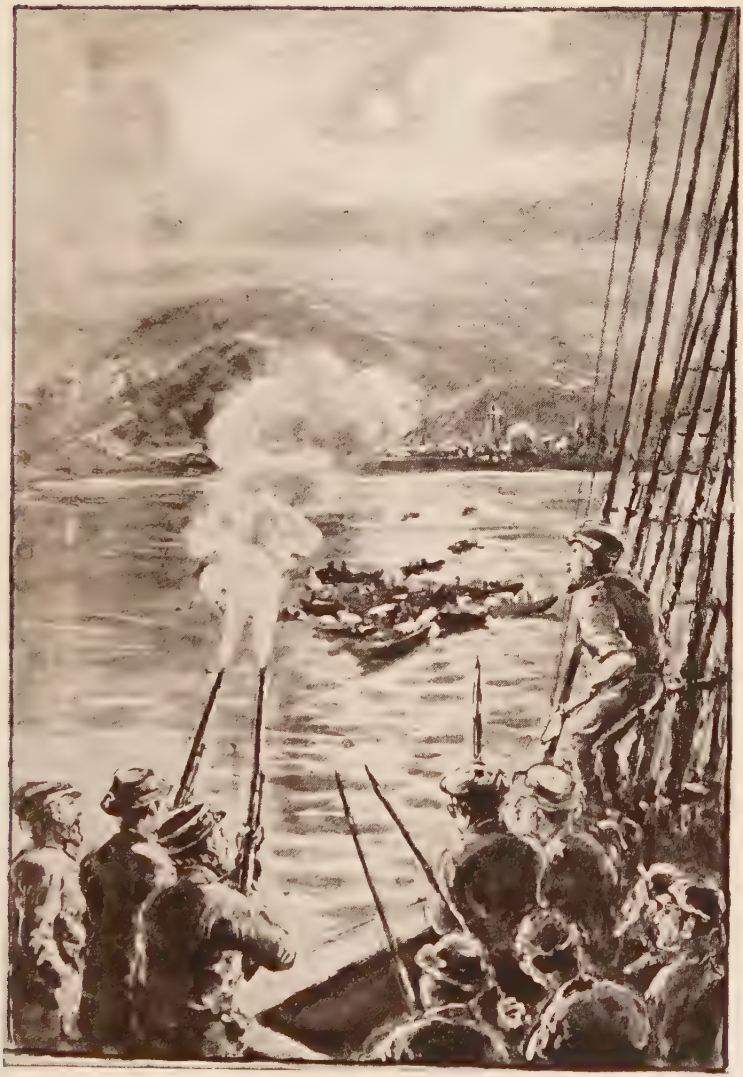
were stranded. We got out a kedge and line in the hope of warping her off, but all our efforts were in vain, so there was nothing for it but to take off the hatches, and lighten the ship by unloading part of our nicely stowed cargo. We were hard at work on this when the fog suddenly cleared, revealing the land about a half-mile away.

Then we were saved any further exertions, for apparently, the whole male population of a little town close to the beach, poured forth, jumped into boats, and in a few minutes our decks were crowded with Turks, working like niggers, in—to them—the pleasing occupation of loading their own boats with our grain.

By and by we could feel our ship lifting, and then began our trouble of making our visitors understand that we were not parting with *all* our cargo. They, for a time, refused to understand our gesticulations and pointings to the shore, and even thrustings towards their boats, but only laughed. Eventually we did get them off our decks, and the ship was once more afloat. But we wanted our kedge, and we saw about the spot where we had grounded a number of boats assembled. It was now growing dark, and the question arose with us—were they going to attack us when night fell? Our skipper

evidently thought so, as he served us out with pikes and muskets. The muskets were kept on a rack which ran round the mizen-mast, below in the cabin, but where the pikes came from I know not. That old sinner, the carpenter, was all there, flourishing his adze, and would have proved an ugly customer at close quarters. The skipper ordered the men to fire the muskets off in the air in order to frighten the Turks away, but they took not the slightest notice of our warlike preparations. What they did do, however, was to fish up our kedge for us, and bring it safely on board, and that without an inch of the bran new manilla missing. It was pitch dark at the time, and our delighted skipper gave them some salt pork and biscuits. It appeared that their boats were hanging round with no sinister intention, but were merely dredging for the grain that we had previously thrown overboard.

We had another little rest in the Dardanelles, once more to trim our cargo; this time, a more difficult job. At length we sailed away for home, and made the record passage, Odessa to Dublin, of ninety days! We discharged our cargo in Dublin, and whilst there the only incident coming our way was of a personal nature, which caused considerable amusement "to others" at the time.



A FALSE ALARM.

One day, I was sitting on a plank under the stern of our ship, engaged in repainting her name, when the other apprentice, unaware of what I was doing, wishing to free the belaying pin to which the rope which held one side of my stage was attached, let it go, with the result that I was shot into the water, followed by the paint-pot, which shed its contents over the spot where I had disappeared. When, therefore, my head emerged from the dirty water, it came through the white paint that was floating on the surface—just ready for me in fact.

I managed to clutch the stage and get hold of the lashing that held the other end, and draw myself thereby up over the stern. I must have looked a ghostly and ghastly spectacle; streaming with water and paint, mostly the latter. When this weird apparition came into view the guilty party gave a yell, and flew for'ard like lightning.

On returning home it was back again to the Tyne School of Art, for I was tired of the sea, and got clear of my apprenticeship without trouble. Possibly the nautical people were tired of me, who knows? But only a couple of months had elapsed when once again I was aboard another barque—a larger one this time, and belonging to another firm.

The head of this firm was a well-known personage of the port from which the ship hailed. From a keelman he had risen to be a wealthy shipowner and a J.P. "Jacky"—as he was familiarly known—was once present at North Shields at the opening of a Sailors' Home, at which the then Duke of Northumberland was to officiate. "Jacky" had never met a duke before, and did not quite know how to open a conversation with such a personage, but the weather served. It was a rainy, dirty-looking day, so "Jacky" turning to his Grace, remarked: "It's a clarty morn, Mr. Duke" (clarty i.e. dirty). Thenceforth the Duke was accustomed to remark in similar weather: "As my friend, Mr. —— remarked, it's a clarty morn."

Poor old "Jacky" had two fine upstanding sons, whom he kept in the nursery long after they had become men—with the usual result. Late one night I was walking with a friend, when I suddenly heard him exclaim, "What the devil did you do that for?" As I turned round I heard a voice—which I recognised as "Jacky's"—exclaim, "I beg yer pardon sor, I thowt it was owr Jack." The mistake had brought my friend a sharp smack across his face; it was after hours for his "boys"—both about

six feet high! It was told that after the household retired at night, they generally climbed out of their bedroom window " and commenced " their day, with disastrous result.

Poor old fellow; he died childless. What became of his wealth I never heard, but he certainly did not spend any of it in over-feeding the sailors on board his vessels.

I now became closely acquainted with Captain William Bradley—better known in the East as " Bully " Bradley. He was a tall, powerful man, of striking, if peculiar characteristics. A strange admixture of gentleman and blackguard, whose greatest pride was in his ship. That he did not lack originality the following story will illustrate. He had picked up in some junk shop as a bargain, a large number of iron bars. He could never resist bargains, and always managed to work them on to the ship in some way or other. These iron bars, however, puzzled him for a long time, until one day, when the ship was lying in port, he happened to descend into the forecastle, and noticed that the weather boards of the bunks were very low. The carpenter was called down, and the iron bars fastened at intervals perpendicularly across the bunks, leaving sufficient space between for the men to crawl in and out.

When our men came on board and went below with their bags, chests and "donkey's breakfasts" they were greatly amused. One of them remarked in my hearing that "it looked like a bloomin' menagerie," and later on some joker in the starboard watch chalked on the woodwork of the bunks of the other watch—then on deck—the names of various zoological specimens—hyena, orang-outang, crocodile, etc. When the other watch went down, they, of course, retaliated, and it became a game with the men at feeding time to imitate the howlings and roarings of the animals whose names appeared on their bunks. This ultimately became such a nuisance that the skipper in desperation had the iron bars removed.

We had an apprentice on board whose time expired within a month or so, yet he had to set out on the voyage to India, which would occupy many months.

His first acquaintance with our skipper gave the latter an opportunity to display the humorous side of his character. It was in this wise. Through the agency of a friend, the lad's mamma became acquainted with Captain Bradley, whose ship then lay in one of the London docks, and as her son—the only child—was continually pestering her to allow him to

go to sea, she asked the captain to take him. The captain had informed her that he was very, *very* particular as to whom he took as an apprentice, he never carried any but the sons of gentlemen, boasted about the library he had formed solely for their use, and indulged in various other fictions.

Poor lady! She knew nothing about the sea or sailors, and inquired anxiously as to how their linen, etc., could be attended to. "Oh, that's all right," answered the captain, "the common sailors do the washing, but," he added as if an afterthought, "they're not equal to starching and ironing and things of that sort, so you'd better let your boy have a lesson or two—and—yes, bring his own Italian iron for his collars." It was all duly absorbed, and the wretched lad came aboard with an iron amongst his belongings! And, of course, he was never allowed to hear the last of it.

But our skipper was always nice to his boys, and never did I see him lay his hand on any one of us, even when we "raised Cain" in the half-deck at the after end of the cabin. This, as was then common, was in a house on deck. Personally, I liked the man very much, in spite of everything I heard against him. For instance, the following yarn was told to me by the apprentice who was nearly out of his time.

On the previous voyage, the captain had his wife and little girl with him, and when on the Chinese coast on the way to Hong-Kong illness overtook the child, and in spite of all they could do she died. The grief-stricken mother could not bear the idea of her little one being buried at sea, so the Captain, in order to preserve the body until he reached the land, placed it in a barrel of ship's rum. In those days, the men were entitled to an allowance of rum, as in the Navy, but it was served out only once a week, and that on Saturday afternoon. Well, the men came aft as usual for their allowance and were told the circumstances under which it was impossible to serve it out. Jack hadn't many privileges in those days, fed as he was on the condemned stores from the Navy, rotten pork and beef and weavilly and maggoty biscuit, and was always ready to make a row if any attempt were made to encroach on his few privileges. So here was a grievance, indeed; the crew got excited and made a rush at the captain, who promptly replied by firing at them and wounding one of the men in the leg. A fiercer and more desperate rush took place, and before the captain could fire again he was overpowered. A bowline was placed over his shoulder, and he was then thrown overboard, where he was towed

until he was nearly drowned. Bradley was a wise man, and thought it better to allow the whole affair to be forgotten.

We were bound for Madras, and arrived there without any untoward incident. The only means of communication with the shore, other than the surf boat, was a wooden pier, which sometime previously had been smashed into two parts during a storm by a French barque; to get ashore, you had to land on one part of the pier and be drawn over to the shore side, sitting in a basket slung on a strong wire cable.

Unloading our coal into surf boats was pleasing work on the whole. All we had to do was to get up at about half-past five so as to settle down nicely to the winch by 6 a.m., and from that time until six in the evening—with an interval for breakfast and a spell of a quarter of an hour at 11 a.m. and a tot of grog; and an hour for dinner, for the rest of our day we merely stood in the nice sunshine—there were no awnings for us—and hove up coals; we did not even have to fill the baskets with coal, for our fellow British subjects, dressed in a simple costume consisting of a string and a pocket handkerchief or a rag of some other kind, attended to all that; other coolies took the coal ashore in their flat-bottomed surf-boats.

We poor natives of northern climes saw two lots of coolies worked out and quitting during the five weeks we were discharging, and a third contingent were about done up when we got her unloaded. I have often wondered how the natives here, and at Port Said, can stand in the hold with naked feet and work the coal in this way; the poor fellows must have soles as thick as their skulls at least!

We got it over at length, and never a man or boy the worse for it—but I wonder what the present generation would have thought of such conditions of life.

It was nice to be an apprentice in those days; one was not troubled by the officer insisting on one being taught navigation; no uncomfortable uniform was required, and all the privileges of the men for'ard, such as tarring the rigging, greasing the mast, wielding the holy stone—i.e. the "Philadelphia Bible"—pertained to the budding seaman. Yes, indeed, and I must not forget that for a change they'd let us act as dock labourers sometimes when we arrived in port.

We lived in a poky den aft, known as "the dog hole,"—sometimes as the half deck, but always was it beastly accommodation, quite unfit for growing lads.

But we thrived on it nevertheless, and turned

out perhaps the finest body of marine officers in the world, bar none; they may be classed with our naval officers or those of the U.S.A. Navy.

After leaving Madras we did not sail our ship to our next destination, we drifted there, sometimes broadside on, often stern first, or at least so it appeared to me, for I never remember a breeze during the many days it took us to reach Coronado. The heat was intense, and we were nearly frizzled to death. When relieved at night, I would step off the wheel grating, flop down on the deck and be asleep in two shakes! I remember one night lying over the wheel fast asleep and dreaming, and giving myself away nicely when the captain appeared on the top of the deck-house, and awakened me by asking how "her head was,"—my reply was "North by south, sir!"

We were everlastingly trimming our yards in the hope of even an imitation of a "catspaw" coming along, but I do not remember one coming. I can only suppose that the set of the current round the coast was in the direction of Coronado, for that is the only manner that I can account for our arrival there.

While we were drifting for days in this dead calm, everyone on board became irritable in the extreme. We slept anywhere—at the wheel, on the look-out, in the lee scuppers, under the

forecastle, and literally gasped for breath, for air there seemed to be none; the litter that we threw overboard hung round us for hours. Amongst our crew were two brothers who hailed from the East End of London; one of them was the steward, the other a forecastle hand. The former was a very "hard case." He had seen life in many lands, and some of his experiences were not such as to be proud of—far from it. The seaman brother was but a poor sailor, who looked more like a country bumpkin. He was continually in trouble with the officers, although with the men, owing to a very amiable temper, and an exceedingly sweet voice, he was very popular. The mate in particular was always "on his bones"; though he himself was a poor creature, who was treated with great contempt by the captain. His name was Todger, but the captain called him "Towzer," and used to whistle as though for a dog when he wanted him. To make up for this the mate took it out of the poor devil for'ard, until at length his constant bullying culminated in a row; "the worm turned" and the mate was struck. The captain and second mate flew to his assistance, and the steward to that of his brother. There was as lively a time as one could wish for, but it did not last many minutes. With the assist-

ance of the carpenter the two brothers were secured, and arrangements made for their confinement. The second mate's berth was emptied and the steward, handcuffed, was placed therein, a few holes being bored in the door for ventilation purposes. The sailor, for what reason I know not, was confined in the hold, on a temporary platform rigged between the deck beams; to make him secure he was handcuffed and a chain passed between his arms through the hatch and padlocked to a ringbolt. What would have happened to the poor wretch if a sudden gale had come on it is easy to guess.

We were left without cook and steward, for Charlie had acted in both capacities, so I, as the youngest apprentice, and, naturally, the most useful of all the crew for the purpose, was appointed to take his place. I am happy to say, by the way, that all hands survived my cooking, though the fact can only be taken as testimony to the hardiness of sailors' digestive apparatus.

Charlie, in the second mate's berth, had not a happy time of it; the mate was appointed by the captain to take his food to him, or perhaps by a refinement of cruelty he undertook the job himself. When I state that his diet consisted solely of bread and water, accompanied by taunts and jeers as entree and dessert, his lot,

cannot be envied. I didn't like the state of things, although, personally, I did not care for the steward, for he was a blackguard with but one redeeming quality that I knew of—his affection for his brother, which had led him into this scrape. There was a little shutter opening from the pantry into his prison, and when the cabin was clear, I used to pass through this as much food to him as I could manage. He would constantly be asking me to smuggle something into the hold for his brother, but that I couldn't manage, although I tried hard.

One morning, as I passed to him a cup of hot coffee and some bread and beef, he held up his left hand and said exultingly, "Now's *my* time! I've squeezed my right hand through the handcuff, and I'll give that old something Hell and Tommy when he comes in this morning," and he shook the handcuff triumphantly. "Well," said I, "don't kill him whatever you do; *that* won't mend matters."

He muttered something and I left him. Of course, I should have told the skipper, but I thought if ever a man deserved a thumping it was the mate, and I knew the skipper would be there in time to prevent much harm being done —and he was, too!

Shortly afterwards the mate went in with

bread and water, jauntily as usual, but this time his jeering came to a swift ending. There was a squeal as though from a stuck pig, and out he came, scrambling on his hands and knees with blood streaming down his head, and the steward after him with upraised iron. What further would have happened I could only surmise, for the captain's head appeared at the state-room door, disappeared, and in a second he was out, facing Charlie, a pistol in each hand. He was red in the face, and trembling with passion. The steward, in turn, stopped dead and, facing the skipper, looked him in the eyes unflinchingly, threw back the shirt from his breast, and said quietly: "Shoot G—— d—— you, shoot!" The skipper's hand shook, and for a second the man's life hung by a thread. The suspense was as short as it was horrible. I breathed again when the skipper, still covering the man, ordered him back into his prison, fastened the door that led into the cabin, and went in search of old Todger, to find him stowed away in one of the boats. He was not much damaged; a rather severe cut on his forehead, the result of the only blow Charlie had been able to get in.

Then followed a tragedy; calling the carpenter the skipper overhauled the bo'sun's

locker, and fished out another pair of handcuffs smaller in size, and also irons for the legs, and to make certain that he had his man safe the carpenter was set to make a wooden cleat that would screw to the deck. They then went in to the prisoner. The other handcuffs and the leg-irons were placed on him, he was thrown to the deck and the cleat was screwed on to the deck over the connecting link of the handcuff—a slot having been made in the cleat for its reception—and the poor devil was left fastened to the deck. The torture nearly killed him. His wild ravings were heard all over the after part of the ship. The heat was still intense, and in his confined berth it was absolutely horrible and unbearable. How he lived through the next five or six days I cannot tell; he must have had a constitution of cast iron. No longer could I smuggle food to him, for he was watched continuously. We arrived at length at Coronado, and the magistrate was sent for, who came on board accompanied by a couple of policemen. The prisoners were brought on deck, the crew assembled, and the skipper read over in a loud voice a long list of charges against them—mutiny, attempted murder, etc., etc., etc.

The sailor brother looked pretty well broken up, but the steward was an awful wreck, with

sunken cheeks and matted hair, and his poor wrists and ankles raw from the chafing of the iron during his struggles in the delirium, he presented a terrible spectacle.

The magistrate looked at him and said: "Good heavens, Captain Bradley, what have you been doing to the man? Whatever he's done you have certainly not erred on the side of mercy, and I should say he's had punishment enough!"

They were taken ashore, and what happened to them I do not know; we never saw them again. I looked at Charlie with wonder as he stepped into the boat with an upright head, for, although a physical wreck, his spirit was not broken in the least. He faced his fate with the same bearing as he had faced the skipper when expecting death on the instant.

We returned from India to Marseilles, where we were to discharge cargo. On our arrival, we were, of course, inundated with shop-sellers, boarding-house sharks, and their crimps or runners. The cargo discharged, our crew, pot-valiant, proceeded to settle their little differences before parting, and then—glory! We three apprentices were monarchs of all we surveyed! Our skipper, who had sent for his wife, put up at an hotel ashore, the other officers had returned

to England to stay there until we got a cargo. A cargo didn't come, the skipper seldom did—so we proceeded as we pleased, which I daresay was not much better, or worse, than others of the same age in the same circumstances—Sandford and Merton were at a discount with us!

We did not pose as examples to others—and, alas, departed from the narrow path in record time. For instance, our captain had arranged with the keeper of a slop shop—"sailors' outfitters," they call themselves—that he should allow us credit for the amount due for wages. We did not want the man's slops—we wanted cash! So we went to the shop and got it by the simple process of allowing him to book it up as clothes; say five francs down would appear in his books as seven francs for a shirt, or other garment. Thus by keeping us without pocket-money the captain actually connived at our cheating ourselves!

Marseilles in those days was inexpensive, and for five francs a very fine evening could be arrived at; and if we could have raised ten francs amongst us, it would have meant quite a debauch. Think of it! Cognac, ten centimes a glass; we even got "champagne"—at least we asked for that, and the bar-tenders would smile and make up something fizzy; we often

patronised the Grand Opera at a franc and a half in the pit. I remember one night we saw *L'Africaine ;* the scene where the ship was boarded by Indians was extremely realistic, the Indians came down with bangs from the rigging on to the deck, and we all applauded loudly. It was only next day that we found it was not acting at all—something had broken, and several of the performers were in the hospital.

At last came the news that we were to ship a cargo of wine and other alcoholic beverages for San Francisco, where, as I discovered later, dwelt a very thirsty people. Then we three wrote harrowing letters to our homes, drawing the attention of those near and dear to us to the fact that we were doomed to "round the Horn" in the depths of winter, and further calling attention to our nakedness. This brought the expected results—big parcels of clothing. So off we went and drew the balance of our wages at the slop shop. Thus ended our captain's nefarious plan. That night it was a café-chantant, bottles of wine—champagne—with real pains and swollen heads to follow. In our voyaging to get on board our vessel one of us fell from the warp on which he was clambering from one ship to another, and fell into the water with a crash, and in attempting to rescue him

another tumbled into a boat, and we all laughed so much that all the dogs in the harbour, I think, recognised us for old friends.

There is no wonder that "divers" accidents happened to benighted wayfarers, when I mention in Marseilles harbour the vessels are, or were, arranged in tiers, head or stern on, to the quay; the innermost tiers consist of the smallest vessels, coasters—feluccas, etc., then come the second size, cutters, small brigs and schooners, and outside the largest vessels. We were outside. Between the tiers there was a space of some twenty to thirty feet on the average, and the vessels were connected by warps, so that if one could not get a boat, and lived in the third street, one had to perform acrobatic tricks to get on board one's ship. Champagne at ten centimes a glass was heady stuff; and the perils of the warp were supplemented by the fact that all the smaller craft kept dogs, mostly far too large for the size of the vessel; so when we clambered aboard with valorous strivings to the deck of the little craft in the first tier, we would be assailed by a large and outrageous mongrel of unknown parentage; naturally we would jump for the rigging, and make our way to the other end of the ship, on the outside of the vessel—mark that!—and have to bob our heads

THE WAYS OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS ARE HARD.

down to prevent their being snapped off, and if a finger or two were not lost it would not be from any fault on the dog's part either! When the warp leading to the next tier was found it might be taut or it might be slack—that was one of the risks of the game; clutching the warp with both hands and throwing the legs round it came the risk of the head being submerged on the journey, or if the weather was windy, the rope might tauten suddenly, and the climber would probably be jerked off. But all this was comparatively nothing! What did count was that the barking of the dogs in the first tier had awakened the myriad canine denizens of the harbour—and in the very next ship there was a dog lying in wait with open jaws, and so on to the outer circle. When things got too hot one dropped into a small boat and commandeered it to try and paddle with the hands to one's ship, or, as an alternative, wait up in the rigging until daylight appeared, probably by that time, not far distant.

We fell into evil ways, and commenced to break the commandments wholesale, with the result of much joy to ourselves and perhaps some loss to our owners.

We were prompted to this by an aged man, evilly disposed, who used to lurk round the bows

of our ship at evening crying forth some word which was French for junk—by which is meant such trifling things as rope, lead, sailcloth, and the hundred and one odd things relative to a ship. We ignored him for quite a long time, but when he held up five-franc pieces, we in a weak moment, succumbed, and from that time forth many and varied were the articles that fell from our ship into his boat.

So 'twas that Satan fixed it up that we were to load alcoholic fluid, and that some of the casks should be leaky, and often were left up-ended over night to be attended to by the cooper in the morning. Then, indeed, came glee for us in a "beef kid"—i.e. a large wooden tub in which the foc'sle beef and pork was served—which served for us as well as a solid silver jug; nay, better, because so much larger. This receptacle we would fill to the brim with wine, and drink lustily and at no expense to ourselves. We also kept a store against headaches, which might—and, in fact, did—sometimes occur in those days of the demon "wets" (the angelic "Drys" were then scarcely heard of). Such confessions as these are, I'm afraid, better fitted for the platform of a Temperance Meeting—made in the right spirit of contrition, but, alas, I would gladly forfeit part of the time I have to

look forward to if I could enjoy, say a month, again of that sinful life at Marseilles!

Our vessel was at last laden, a new mate joined us, and our captain, remembering that there was a ship lying in the harbour with which he was connected, also turned up—and to some purpose. The freighters were beginning to add a deck cargo, although we were already deeply laden, and in vigorous language our skipper informed their agent that we were rounding the Horn in the dead of winter; he could give his ship a deck cargo if he wished, but he'd be damned if every cask didn't go overboard in the first breeze-up we encountered. This threat proved effective. Needless to say, this occurred before the day of the Plimsoll mark.

We shipped our crew, and heavens! what a job lot of oddments they were! A contrast indeed to the sturdy north of England men we had before. They represented half-a-dozen nationalities, and far from prize specimens at that. The wretched belongings which they brought on board with them made me sad when I thought of what was before us. In one or two instances their "baggage" was contained in small bundles. They all looked as though the world had used them badly, and they brought their ill-luck with them.

CHAPTER II

AN ICY INFERNO

It was an unfortunate voyage from the time we left Marseilles until we anchored at Valparaiso, a battered wreck of a ship after a voyage that lasted well over five months.

The beginning of the hoodoo under which we fell, was off the River Plate where they keep tornadoes in stock, one of which was handed out to us with an astonishing result. It is necessary that I should here explain that some genius had invented a patent topsail that could be rolled round the yard, and that we were fitted with two of them. They were so arranged that when they had to be taken in they blew backwards on the yards, unless the wind was dead aft. In furling them, therefore, we had to spring out from the topmast rigging on to the bellying sails, and chance hitting the yard and footrope. On very dark nights it was somewhat of a lottery whether we brought this off.

When we were hit by this tornado we were reefed, but the wind carried the fore-topsail right up the mast until the sail was at full stretch. Hurriedly we clapped on the patents "down-haul" and did not this time forget to make it fast.

Then things began to happen; it was "All hands take in sail" with a vengeance! The elder apprentice and myself were sent out to stow the inner jib, and a rough job we had! The wind had brought a heavy sea with it, and every now and then the ship was trying hard to stand on its head. One moment we were looking down on the ship, and the next up to the waist in water, clinging the while like grim death to the inner jib-stay. The sail was dodging in and out of the sea, but mostly blowing straight outwards; it was almost impossible to gather it in and at the same time save ourselves from being washed away. However, we did it and not too well, and staggered on deck blowing like walruses and with water pouring out of all our seams. It was just striking eight bells, and we joyfully hurried aft to get our wet "duds" off, and into our bunks. We had but just turned in and scarcely closed our eyes, when we heard someone yelling, though in the tumult of the storm the voice sounded indistinct. But

conscience troubled us, and we guessed the words were, "Who in the ——— was it that went out to stow that inner jib?" We lay low. Then came: "The two of you hurry out and make the blinking thing fast before it flaps itself to pieces." We smiled, but too soon, for presently we heard a great crash—and then, "All hands on deck! Hurry up boys, here's hell to pay and no pitch hot." We knew what that meant—and jumping out of the bunks and into our pants, we hurried on deck, to discover that the ship had danced her jib-boom off—smashing it close to the bowsprit—with the result that the fore-topmast had carried away through the topsail halyards sheave hole, and the topmast head, together with the top-gallant and royal masts with their yards, were all hanging suspended aloft by what appeared to be a backstay, which had caught on the sagged top of the broken topmast.

It was now quite dark, and we could hear the wreckage of the jib-boom hammering and pounding away at our hull, as though trying to knock a hole in our port bow.

Hurriedly I questioned a man as to the fate of those who had gone out to restow the inner jib, and a great weight was lifted from my mind on hearing that they were safe; they had, in

IN A PAMPERO OFF THE RIVER PLATE.

fact, just reached the forecastle, when the "barky" made the super dive that brought about all this havoc.

There was good reason for me to inquire, for if I'd taken that extra hitch in the gasket when stowing the sail, it probably would not have blown adrift.

There was some confusion at first, but it did not last long. We got busy, and, after herculean efforts, got the wreckage on board; but meanwhile, that suspended aloft was an even greater menace to our safety. To complicate matters the lee clewline of the topsail had got adrift, and that sail was threshing and banging furiously. I presumed that nothing could be done with the top-hamper until we had that sail stowed, as a volunteer was called for to go up on the fore-yard to hook on the clewline which had got adrift.

No one stirred in response to the "One of you chaps, etc." Such modesty was unusual, so being young and extremely foolish, up I went. This is not related in any boastful vein, as it was the outcome of sheer ignorance of the risk involved—not only from the topsail and its sheet—the latter was chain, which had broken and was being hurled about—but there above was the wreckage hanging by a single rope!

The foreyard was a cockbail, but I got out safely, bobbing up and down every time the sail flung aft; one moment of hesitation on the part of the beastly thing did the trick for me, and I stepped down on deck, quick as a lamplighter on piece-work.

It was an all night's job before we had the wreckage, together with the jib-boom, safely down and lashed alongside our bulwarks. On the next morning the wind suddenly fell, but the heavy sea did not follow its good example, and there came for us three days—and nights—of martyrdom, for our gallant ship now commenced to attempt, happily ineffectually, to roll her masts out. The lower yards were often within kissing distance of the sea, and sometimes she would roll her top-gallant rails under the water. Until the sea fell the time was spent by all hands putting the vessel ship-shape, which involved a tremendous lot of work. Failing a spare spar that would make a new topmast, we had to make the best of the old one, which we got down on deck. This entailed cutting a new sheave hole and shortening all the upper rigging. When the heavier rolls occurred, it became an all too common incident for the men to be hurled or washed from port to starboard and vice-versa, accompanied by the

rigging and all the rigger's outfit—grease-pots, fids, marlinspikes, tackles, etc., etc.

During these three days, it was "all hands on deck," all the time, with but an hour or so's sleep in the twenty-four in shifts. We ate and drank as we worked, for had we been caught in another tornado, or even an ordinary gale with only the foresail as head sail, we should indeed have been in Queer Street.

When it was all over we felt badly the strain we'd undergone, but far more the many bruises we had acquired during our involuntary pilgrimages about our decks.

And it was, save for the everlasting creaking of the yard, and the flapping of the sail, the quietest three days I think I ever experienced at sea. Except for an occasional "Oh," followed by "damn," not a word was spoken except for a few quiet orders now and then from the officers, and the "aye, aye, sir" in response—not a single growl of the usual kind. Jack knows when he is "up against things," and he has to play the man. It is well known that as a persistent growler he has taken championship honours, and he enjoys it immensely, it is a labour of love; but, he chiefly reserves it for fine weather. Then he lets himself go, and the smaller the reason for voicing his

grievance, the louder and more persistent his grumbling.

In a week or two we were skirting the dreary coast of Patagonia, with its ranges of colossal mountains, and in due course reached the Straits of Le Maire. As we passed through them, with a black and lowering sky ahead, I had a presentiment of evil, intensified by the horribly forlorn aspect of Tierra del Fuego, and the forbidding mountain, Staten Island, looming up on our port side.

Then we proceeded to " get it in the neck "—to use an Americanism—good and hard. There was a close touch on our part to leave the bones of our ship, and perhaps our own, to bleach on the dreary shore of the Straits, but, fortunately for us, the quick eye of our skipper espied, not an instant too soon, a ripple on the surface of a reef, for which we—or rather I—was steering straight; the wind was off shore and we were hugging the land much too closely.

The last gleam of a late autumn's sun disappeared, and we sailed into a blackness that seemed solid in its intensity, and it was not long before Dame Nature gave us a taste of what she had up her sleeve for us. The wind from the nor'west drove us south'ard and eastward, and mountainous waves were hurled against our

little craft—we were only some 450 tons register and deeply laden!

Occasionally a fair wind would come our way, and we would make slight progress on our right course, but it would be only a cat-and-mouse affair, for scarcely had hope sprung up anew in our breasts, and the haggard and care-worn faces had broken once again into something of a smile, when down would come the everlasting nor'wester with its hurricane, driving us farther and farther to the south, with the cold steadily increasing. Hove to, or reaching, drifting and drifting, the weeks went by, and our ragged crew, with their old look of helplessness resumed, were becoming daily more and more enfeebled and less able to cope with the withering and icy wind and sea. How the former did howl, and how the sleet did pelt us! The thought of it even to this day causes me to shudder.

Then semi-starvation took a hand in the game. We were not provisioned with the idea of our doing the *Flying Dutchman* stunt off the Horn, and so we were put on an allowance. It was a sorry sight to see us assembled aft at eight bells in the morning; with little canvas bags in which to receive the handful of broken biscuit, and the two and a half ounces of pork,

which had to serve us for twenty-four hours. Think of it—the cold and exposure of the whole twenty-four hours, of which often seventeen or eighteen were spent in the open air—and except for tea and coffee and a very occasional glass of grog, that was all we had to sustain us!

Our for'ard hands by this time would have given scarecrows many points; their sufferings had become well-nigh intolerable. The conditions below were almost as bad as those aloft or on deck, for there was no stove in the fo'c'sle, and the deck seams leaked so badly that one was lucky to have a dry berth to turn into. The bedclothes consisted mostly of old canvas and ragged blankets; this was all they had with which to cover their aching bones. Such boots and shoes they had brought with them had mostly dropped to pieces, but their feet were so swollen and covered with salt-water sores—which extended up their lower limbs—that boots could not have been worn if they'd had them.

As a substitute for both boots and stockings our men wore bits of flannel and old canvas, tied round their feet and legs by spun-yarn. The ship's "slop" chest had long been emptied —"sold out"—so our captain served those who

wanted them with pieces of new canvas with which to make jumpers. These might have served fairly well as substitutes for sea-jackets and oilskins, if only they could have been dried occasionally; but, apart from the fact that there was no stove in the fo'c'sle, there was no galley fire for the purpose, as the galley itself had disappeared one night in the company of a good part of the starboard bulwarks! This had mattered but little so far as cooking was concerned, for what was necessary to be done in that way was carried out easily on the cabin stove.

The only man who came through this ordeal with any triumph was our cook and steward. He was a stoutly-built and tall German—and deserves mention for his wonderful endurance. He went through all the horrors of the passage round the Horn clad in a thin blue jersey and a pair of dungaree trousers, the latter made of linen. He wore neither shoes nor stockings, nor do I remember his having a head covering. Of course he spent most of his time in the cabin, and hadn't to face what we others had—yet it showed marvellous endurance all the same.

All this is bitten in my memory by the fact that during the last weeks off the Horn I shared most of the suffering of the for'ard hand, for

though I had started fairly well equipped with clothing, many of my garments had rotted away owing to the constant drenching they had. My presence on the forecastle was due to a little unpleasantness between the carpenter and myself. "Chips" was a relative of the skipper's, and a very small, weak young man. We were having a little "scrap up," and "Chips" was getting the worst of it when the captain came along and caught us. I was immediately informed that I was something extremely unpleasant —a blackguard, in fact; he was not going to have one of his officers (?) assaulted, so I could just clear out into the fo'c'sle, bag and baggage.

I left my snug quarters aft with great regret, for although there was no fire there, it was, at any rate, sheltered, and above all, dry.

The daily programme never or seldom varied; at eight bells it was "all hands wear ship"; then up aloft and change the preventer braces from one side to another; and then the watch coming on deck would either assist the others in pumping the ship out, or continue that work by themselves. We were rather glad to have it to do, for at any rate, it kept us warm!

Matters finally came to such a pass that, rather than face the cutting blast that wrestled with our enfeebled frames and often pinned us help-

lessly to the rigging, the weaker of our crew took to stowing themselves below when the nights were very dark—as they mostly were—finding refuge in the fore-peak, the sail locker, anywhere, in fact, to avoid the cruel cold that was so torturing.

On one occasion the mate had the running part of the top-gallant halyards placed round under the arms of a shirker, and he was then actually hoisted aloft as a warning to the others. Towards the last it used to take the lot of us to get these preventer braces up—only a block and a line; in normal circumstances a couple of hands would have managed it in two minutes. At times I was on the foreyard with the whole crowd for a long half-hour in our endeavours to stow the foresail; we were nearly helpless, our fingers bleeding through trying to grasp the canvas which was frozen nearly as stiff as a board. One or two of the men would be simply hanging on to keep themselves from falling, others wept like little children. I sometimes wondered whether it would not be better to let go my hold and make an end of it, for apparently there was nothing to look forward to but more suffering, with a cruel death at the finish!

Our captain, a brave man, of splendid physique and a strong will to boot, evidently also thought

the ship was doomed, as he shut himself up in the cabin and seldom appeared on deck. A rumour got abroad that he was drinking himself to death, and had the "jim-jams," but I was loath to believe it.

One wild afternoon we shipped another of the Cape Horn "specials," and the great mass of water that poured on our decks sent the port bulwarks flying—actually twisting out of shape the solid iron davits of one of our boats. Our watch had but a moment before left the pumps, and the others were hurled into the lee scuppers, but saved themselves by clinging to the spars and ropes which we had rigged up. I had got abreast of the foremast on my way below, when my share of the wave landed on my unlucky self, knocking me senseless, and, what was worse, splitting my monkey jacket right up to the collar; it was shivered as if it had been struck by lightning!

I was picked up and carried below and filled up with rum. They thought that the aroma alone would restore me, but I had to be dealt with liberally before consciousness was really restored. There were no bones broken, but I managed to "sham Abraham," and remain in my bunk for a couple of days on the strength of it. There was a strong element of luck about

this experience, but narrow escapes were—and I daresay are still—of frequent occurrence in sailing ships. I remember once when the rest of the crew were standing silently watching my manœuvres on the main top-sail yard-arm on which I was perched. The halyards of the patent top-sail, which I have previously mentioned, had carried away, letting the yard-arm down with a crash, breaking the lifts, and, at the same time, the pin that connected the chafing spar to which the foot-rope and brace were attached. This left nothing but the yard-arm to rest on. I had managed to get out, but there was no means of getting back again until I had slung a bowline round this spar, as the top-sail braces and the foot-rope were attached to it, and I had to get it close enough to the yard to put in a new pin.

The ship was rolling heavily, and there was a doubt whether the weight of the spar and the heavy brace block would pull me off or not. It was a toss up, but Providence was good to me and I won. The fixing of the spar accomplished, the foot-ropes were available for my return. If, during this operation, I had been inundated with suggestions and orders from the deck, I would probably have lost nerve and gone overboard, but, as on the other occasion

to which I have referred, there was dead silence, and when I returned on deck no remark was made. Everyone was used to gambling with death, and the incident was forgotten a moment or two after.

One tragedy, however, came to a climax. Among the crew was a man who was a mystery to the rest of us. Of aristocratic appearance and evidently well educated, it was a matter of wonder with us how he came to be in such a position. He let slip on one occasion that his father was a clergyman and a close relation of a Canadian notability, but he never again referred to his connexions. His previous ship had been a U.S.A. man-o'-war, on which he had enlisted as a landsman—a common practice. I had formed the impression, from his appearance, that he was a man who had gone the pace in his early youth, for he had a bemused look that is generally associated with the confirmed drug-taker. He went about his work as might an old man, yet he had not a grey hair in his head or in his yellow beard. As a sailor he was utterly hopeless.

Under the strain of our battling round the Horn, with its shortage of food and sleep, his shattered constitution gave way. It became more and more difficult to rouse him at eight

bells from his sodden, rag-covered bunk, and one night when he was due for a trick at the wheel, a quarter of an hour elapsed before he struggled on deck, and then he was endeavouring to pull on his canvas jumper. The mate, who had gone to see why the man at the wheel had not been relieved, came across the poor wretch whilst he was wrestling with the jumper, and drawing his knife ripped up the miserable garment, and felled the man to the deck with a terrific blow from his great fist, at the same time cursing him for his dilatoriness.

This was the beginning of the end; the next night he had to be dragged out of his bunk, and with great difficulty he managed to struggle aft. The steering at the time was easy enough, as the ship was reaching, but the man was too ill even to turn the wheel; he fell, and as he did so the wheel flew round like lightning and struck him in the ribs. The mate heard the noise, rushed out and, kicking the man, ordered him to get on top of the house and keep a look out, "if you can't do anything else you——," etc.

Whilst standing at the wheel in his place I could see the poor wretch lying on the fore part of the deck—it was a moonlight night. I could also hear him groaning in agony. I think

some of his ribs must have been broken when the wheel struck him.

I could do nothing then, but when I was relieved I got assistance and we carried the poor wretch for'ard. Next day he couldn't be moved, and when we assembled aft to have our beggarly rations doled out, he was absent.

"Tell him," cried the mate with an oath, "that I'll have no malingering aboard the ship, and if he doesn't come for his food, he'll have to do without it."

For two days and nights the man lay speechless; we tried in vain to get him to eat part of our scanty fare, but in vain, he simply moaned without opening his eyes. On the third night we found him lying stark naked in the sail locker; how he had managed to get there, or strip himself, was a mystery. Then we again spoke to the steward saying "something must be done. The man's dying, and this is nothing short of murder."

The mention of "murder" was sufficient; the sufferer was carried aft to the cabin, but it was too late to do him any good; he died in a couple of hours after his removal, passing away without recovering consciousness.

We often wondered, was the name he had given his real one, and what his history was.

The often-described sea funeral took place, and the skipper sent for'ard to see if there were such a thing as a Prayer Book there—as it was wanted for the burial service. The most hardened sinner on board gave us the surprise of our lifetime, by producing an old and hoary-looking one from the inmost recesses of his bag. He said he always carried it about with him "for luck." Well, it had led him astray this voyage—if it was good luck he meant!

I do not think the man would have lived, in any circumstances, after the hardships he had undergone, but there is no doubt that the callous brutality of the mate hurried him to his end. Sea-life is not—or, rather, was not—fitted for the feeble bodied; every man counts, and a sick one or two in a small ship laid a heavy burthen on the backs of the others, apart from the risk to their own lives.

There was a particularly weird experience of my own during this wrestle with Nature's forces off the Horn. One very dark night we fell on the only dead calm on our passage—it lasted only until morning. While standing at the wheel I distinctly heard the sound of a ship approaching, the flapping of sails and the creaking of yards. It drew nearer and nearer, and I could not understand how, with no wind, or,

at least, only enough to keep a course, she seemed to be making such good progress, and I became afraid that she would come on board our ship. Suddenly all sounds ceased abruptly; there was no gradual abatement such as could be anticipated if she crossed our track—they simply ceased. I was as much afraid of this sudden silence as I had been of the noise of her approach. What did it mean? I've never been able to explain it satisfactorily, even to myself.

It's a long lane that has no turning, and the fates, having given up all hopes of destroying us, kindly unbent, and sent us a beautiful and welcome fair breeze that carried us gently into the South Pacific without any further mishap. We poor, starving shellbacks began to "buck up"; even the mate's dour countenance began to soften, until he looked quite human. All the odds and ends of reserve food in the cabin lockers were trotted out, and our bones became less prominent each day.

Great doings went on; our rags and tatters were exposed to view, hanging out to dry in the rigging, and, ye gods! what a show they made! Petticoat Lane would not have given sixpence for the lot, but they were very much in harmony with the ship and crew, both of which looked promising candidates for the scrap

heap—the ship, indeed, looked as if she'd been scrapping with icebergs, and had lost every time!

The weather was now warm, not at all Christmassy, and when Christmas Day turned up it was kept right royally aboard the *William Stothard*, particularly so in "the bone house", as the forecastle was called. For reasons now fast fading, we were given more generous fare; miracles happened—plum duff for once. Then came the steward bearing with him a generous donation in the shape of a bottle of gin and three bottles of ale. After dining sumptuously the merry crew beguiled the afternoon with merrier pranks, even unto playing at such unseemly games as leap frog, laughing uproariously the while, and causing great wonder to the sojourners in the cabin, who marvelled much at the wonderful effect of "one bottle of spirit and three of beer."

So it came to pass that a visit was paid to the fo'c'sle by the "Dicky" (second mate) with a view to finding the cause of this gaiety; he found nothing to justify it. If he had turned up a little earlier he would have seen an opened case of vermouth, and another of "Bass," and the inmates of the forecastle sitting round drinking, each man his own bottle, with never a

corkscrew—the necks had been knocked off. The contrast between the men of Christmas and those of a week or so earlier was marvellous, and enough to cause wonder indeed.

A midnight visit of my own to my former habitation in the half deck was the cause of it all, as it resulted in the passing up of the cases of vermouth and "Bass." I am ready to admit that my conduct was most reprehensible according to the standard of these days, but as circumstances alter cases (we emptied these!) if it had not been for the cases of wine and beer that occasionally found their way down the forecastle, life would have been much harder to bear.

What was my conduct in comparison with that of the merchants at Marseilles in loading a vessel, bound round the Horn in winter, with a cargo that sank her down close to the water's edge!

Then again, if these merchants had possessed any sense of shame they would not have chosen the lazaret, in which to stow a lot of cases of vermouth and other drinks, right under our noses, so to speak, for the only access to this place was down a hatch in the apprentices' berth. We could not go down there in search of a block and coil of rope without being stared in

the face by them—and so simple, a chisel would open a case! How could we resist such temptation?

After I was banished from the half-deck, a feud between the other two apprentices became accentuated; they had more room for one thing in which to spar about. At length Captain Bradley became tired of their scufflings and quarrels—which at times were heard plainly in the cabin—and sending for the culprits informed them that this sort of thing had to end, and they would have to settle then and there which of the two was the best man; if the loser did not knuckle under for good and the fighting continued, he himself would take a hand in it, and then, Lord help them!

A ring was promptly formed by the crew on deck, who were allowed to come aft, doubtless for the laudable purpose of seeing fair play. I, unfortunately, was at the wheel at the time, but I consoled myself with the thought that as neither of them knew as much of science as an old cow, the "scrap" was not really worth seeing. And so it proved; age and weight settled the matter, and peace and quiet followed thereafter in the half-deck. Captain Bradley was a wise man in his generation, and it is, I believe, allowable to lend oneself to a little evil—

that good might follow thereby—especially when there is a fairly reasonable excuse for the "little evil."

We were now making for Valparaiso, for it was absolutely necessary that we should be patched up before continuing our voyage, and that port was the nearest and most suitable for the purpose. New spars, boats, bulwarks, galley, and a fresh stock of provisions were required. One fine day we arrived there, and let go our anchor.

Poor—and silly—Jack did the usual thing in the circumstances; within a few hours of our arrival the whole of the for'ard hands had lowered themselves over the bows into the boats of the crimps, leaving their pay behind them. They'd "had enough of the ——— hooker"—and didn't want anything to remind them of what they'd undergone; they said there was a curse on the ship; and that she was doomed. They also believed that the forecastle was haunted by the ghost of the "murdered" man—for so they termed him—and if we'd had another week or so off the Horn as things were going his ghost would have had company, that was certain. Then again the mate's fist was a heavy one—and he used it too often. As for Captain Bradley, they lived in terror of what he might

do if he once started. Jack was, and I daresay is, never short of reasons for handing over the pay that may be due, to the owner, by clearing out and leaving it behind.

I wondered at the runners taking our little lot of cripples, but they would doubtless soon feed them up and dispose of them for their two month's advance as usual.

Talk about luck! The next vessel to us lying in the bay was a full rigged ship, which had gone through the Strait of Le Maire a bare forty-eight hours in front of us, engaged meanwhile in painting her bulwarks! The weather was fine, she had all her fair weather kites flying, and stun-sails set on both sides; in a few days she had run clear of the Horn, and was now on her way back to Europe after discharging her cargo. I forget why she had occasion to put into this port, but I fancy it was because she had sprung a leak.

What a picturesque sight our old ship looked from the shore or a boat! Never have I seen, before or since, anything like her that wasn't piled up on a rocky beach a total wreck! Her sides were absolutely bleached white, with the oakum sticking out of the seams; a tangle of ropes, oars, spars, etc., formed her bulwarks amidships; the missing galley and boats and the

twisted davits, and with the jury jib-boom, and makeshift and shortened fore-topmast, all helped to make her an attraction to the natives, and seafarers generally. "One of the Horn's lame ducks," I heard her termed. The carpenter's and fitters were hard at work patching her up for five solid weeks.

One day, while a carpenter was boring a hole in the side of the ship for a bolt, his auger went right through into a cask of wine, and the liquor flew out into the man's face; nearly washing him off his staging. Then, indeed, did we show the presence of mind for which the British sailor is noted; a single glance took in the situation, and in a twinkling buckets, kettles and beef kids were filled from the outpour. Alas, that the blessings that are showered on us by some benevolent spirit should be so abused! I have to say with regret that the carpenters went ashore that afternoon "blind to the world"; on the other hand, we on board the ship—with the fear of Captain Bradley before us—had to keep fairly sober.

Valparaiso was a most interesting place in those days; there was always something going on—or off, I should add. One day, I also went off, and for a brief few minutes added to the gaiety of the city. Becoming "fed-up" with

things in general, I conceived the brilliant idea of leaving the ship, and so one day I hailed a passing boat and went ashore. Inquiring my way, I made for a sailors' boarding-house, and introduced myself as one in search of a ship, but I had not been there for many hours before the boss came to me saying, "Young feller, you've got to clear out o' this. Inquiries are being made for you, and a reward offered. I'll get into trouble, for I didn't know you was an apprentice, or I wouldn't have let you in. This was bad news for me, and there was nothing left but to clear out, which I promptly did. Then a brain wave came—I'd go to Santiago; true it was fifty miles away, and I hadn't a copper in my pocket and nothing but what I stood in. But these were trifles to one of my age and temperament, so I determined forthwith to walk there! It was first necessary that I should get to the railway track, so that I should have a guide to follow, but to do this meant walking round nearly the whole circle of the city—I dared not go straight through the town or I should have been "nabbed." So, commencing from a hill at the south side of the city, I made a bee-line across other hills of the switchback variety in the hope of striking the rails. It was a very hot day and the climbing

very tiring. I kept interrogating any natives I happened to meet, but as I did not speak Spanish, nor they English, it did not help me much. At last, I pulled a scrap of an envelope and a pencil from my pocket, and drew weird representations of a locomotive and carriages the while pointing in the direction in which I surmised the railway lay; but those to whom I showed it merely laughed. Then, as it was getting dusk, I retired to the softest-looking hill I could see and, lying down thereon, tried to get some sleep. It was an inexpensive lodging, and there was plenty of fresh air, but it was not appreciated!

Next morning I felt very stiff and hungry, though I wasn't worried about *that*, for the hillside was softer than my "donkey's breakfast" (i.e. tick stuffed with straw, which served me as bed in the forecastle), and as for hunger, I could have taken up hunger-striking as a profession! It was other reasons that led me to call at the boarding-house! When I arrived there, to my great surprise, I met with a distinctly favourable reception. I was invited to breakfast, and when that was finished, was informed that the "Boss" had a schooner waiting, on board of which I could get a berth, and would I walk down to the shipping office

and interview the skipper thereof? Of course I would, and on arrival in the vicinity of the boat landing-place, was asked to enter a shop whilst the boss went in for the skipper. The skipper duly arrived, but he was my own, and was accompanied by a harbour policeman, or whatever they call them in Chili! The interview was brief—Captain Bradley said: "Well, Tom, you've got to come on board"—then turning to the official, he added: "Bring him down to the boat," and went off. I said nothing, but on quitting the shop jerked myself out of the clutches of my conductor, and fled in the direction of my last night's bed—the hills.

Young, light and active, I left my pursuer well in the rear at once, but first one *vigilante* joined in the pursuit, and then another; then a dog or two took up the running, so I had quite a tail before I got out of the town. The Chilians came to their doors and cheered me on, laughing outrageously when one of the pantomime *vigilantes* came a cropper over a dog or boy. Soon it was a solo performance, and once more I found myself on the hills.

Then I did some thinking; what I thought, would I do at Santiago if I got there? Would I get a job as president of a bank, or boot-black? House painting? No, my style of brush-work

was more in the style of miniature painting, at that time. But, after all, I thought, there's always 'Frisco. When I get there I'll walk ashore, there I can lose myself at once. So thus cogitating, I made my way down to the shore and waited until a boat came from the *William Stothard*, into which I stepped and went aboard. The skipper made no allusion to my little flutter, and I lay low.

Life was free and easy in the bay in those days. The sight of a Yankee ship, with the crew bolting from her in runners' boat, and the officers standing on her forecastle firing at them with revolvers in broad daylight, scarcely caused comment; the evenings were made lively by the howling of the day's delinquents, or "black listers," on board of the Chilian war vessels lying in the bay. The officers on these ships did not believe in letting the sun go down on their wrath, so they settled the scores for the day on the backs of the evil-doers with a cat-o'-nine-tails.

Then came a great day, indeed, a very great day, for the whole of Chili, and Valparaiso in particular, viz., the arrival from New Orleans of two monitors, after a passage of *nine* months! They were a purchase of the Chilian Government, but what they intended them for, I know not.

The flag-wagging, the saluting, and the general fête-day excitement was tremendous, when these oddities, accompanied by an escort, but under their own steam, waddled into the Bay. There are many still living who can remember the lozenge-shaped, low platform, with the turret in the centre, on these curiosities of Civil War days in the U.S.A. They were, indeed, a wonderful evolution in shipping in the way of the ironclad war vessel, and reflected great credit on their inventor, but they were only intended for harbour duty, with a freeboard, say, of three feet or four at the outside. There were no bulwarks, and only the top of the turret for exercise of the crew when at sea. When it is considered that they had none of the facilities in the way of ventilation or lighting that are in practice to-day, it is easy to imagine the horrors of below deck in them, with smoky oil lamps as the sole source of light. However, they had accomplished the voyage from New Orleans, and the only accident on the way was the sinking of one of the men of war that formed their escort; one of the monitors effected the sinking!

A tremendous bounty had been given to the crew at the outset, but whenever the sky had looked angry the vessels had put into the nearest port, and the crews had promptly deserted. In

every case a new crew had to be engaged with a repetition of the huge bounties, so that by the time the destination was reached, whichever of the two nations was footing the bill stood in great risk of being bankrupt.

It is well known that old Valparaiso disappeared under the sea in a great earthquake that devasted the Chilian coast. In the bay is an island, to which is attached the following legend:

When it was rising from the sea, it came up under a humble fisherman's boat with nets and all, which rose with the island. They show you the very spot on which the boat came up, and also point out that it is the only place on the island where the grass grows. I believe they canonised the fisherman, and the island bears his name.

One day I was despatched on an interesting expedition, the outcome, indirectly, of our shiping a new crew. It was made up of an assortment of the chiefest ornaments of Valparaiso's insalubrious beach, and two of them had not turned up according to plan, on the day before sailing.

I was sent to find them under the guidance of our ship's chandler, who did not follow any false trails, but made direct for the nearest jail.

It consisted of a large building surrounded by a walled-in open space. There was a delightful simplicity about it; the building contained no furniture whatever, and the prisoners—a cheery crew—were herded together indiscriminately. The sleeping arrangements were equally simple; the prisoners made their beds on the bare ground; if they possessed a *poncho* they had a covering; if not, then they laid "light." They were given enough food of the simplest variety and sufficient in quantity to keep them alive; in the daytime they were let out into the yard, where they could dance, sing, gamble, and fight to their hearts' content. Occasionally they were drafted out to sweep the streets or to clean out the military stables. As it was a republic, their live stock, I may add, was common property. We did not see the women's prisons, because we guessed that our missing links would not be there, and eventually we tracked them down to one of the military stables, engaged in "mucking" it out; in fact, a job for which they were entirely fitted. As "drunks" only, they had had the option of a fine; but as they had no money, they had the privilege of working it out.

One day we saw a large barge entering the bay in tow of a small gunboat, and our attention was attracted by the uncommon spectacle of a

number of gorgeously attired Indians in the former. On inquiry we were told that they were on the way to arrange a treaty with Chili. It appeared that they came from a country on the southern boundaries of Chili, with which country they had been waging a war that had lasted some thirty years—they still remaining unconquered. I did not wonder at this, if they were all like their chiefs, who were fine, dignified-looking men, not one of whom, I guessed, was under six feet in height, and one or two were gigantic.

There was lying in Valparaiso Bay at that time the *Challenger*, known for its researches in the depths of the ocean. She was a composite auxiliary frigate—and later fought a duel with the Peruvian ironclad, *Huasca*. There had been a revolution in Peru and the Navy joined the rebels, who, later, were defeated. The *Huasca* then started to do a little pirating to keep her going, and foot the mess bills, and helped herself to food from other vessels. She tackled one or two English merchant vessels, and as in those days we did not allow any nation to throw mud at us, much less to rub it in, as the sailor put it, the *Challenger* went out to quieten the pirate. The fight lasted a couple of hours, and the ironclad had to pull her flag down.

Some twenty years or so ago I again saw the *Challenger* lying a hulk in the Medway. It reminded me of old times.

A few days before quitting Valparaiso, our youngest apprentice cleared out. Well educated and amiable in disposition, he was densely stupid, and I felt sorry for him when I heard he had gone, for I reckoned he would fall on a rough time. Years after I received a letter from his poor mother; he was her only son, and was never heard of after he left our ship.

Just a final incident of our stay in Valparaiso. Three of us had gone ashore in our boat, and had commenced to return, when a mighty wind swept down from the land, and presently we had discovered that our rowing was useless—we were being swiftly swept out to sea! We tried in vain to make some of the ships that were lying in the bay, but just as we had given up all hope and were passing the most seaward vessel, we caught a rope deftly thrown from her, and were saved from certain death, for we should have been utterly helpless in rough water in a few more minutes, and no assistance could have arrived.

We stayed on board our ark of refuge for two or three hours, until the wind had abated,

for these *pamperos*, or whatever they call them, do not last long.

During our stay in this ship I found myself in the house where the hands were berthed. One sturdy young fellow was lying in his bunk, but he looked far from sick. On my asking him what he would do if the mate came along and yanked him out, he smiled, and, putting his hands under the bed clothes, pulled out an ugly-looking bludgeon. "Anyone," he said, "that comes in here and tries to interfere with a poor sick man will be sorry that ever he was born."

We left the bay at length, and, praise heaven, we had fine weather, so our curiosities from the beach escaped the mate's heavy fist. We succeeded in reaching 'Frisco in due course, and as soon as she was moored I stepped on shore from the *William Stothard* for the last time.

CHAPTER III

ON THE PACIFIC COAST—1868–9

It was whilst on shore at Valparaiso that I first heard the name of "blood ship" applied to a vessel.

One day whilst I was gazing on a smart American clipper, full rigged, an old sailor happened along.

"Looks a beauty, don't she," he said, "yet that ship's scuppers have run blood many a time. She's the *Almiranda*, and a blood ship, and it is only in ports where she is a stranger that they can ship a crew for her these days, unless they can get hocussed hands from the Shanghaiers."

If half the stories that came my way later were true, it was evident that there were more incarnate devils in the world than ever I had thought possible; even though due allowance were made for exceptional cases—where a crew of toughs, or some who were hopeless as sailors were shipped.

The blame, though, was not all on one side. How many, among the average officers, could subdue a mutinous crew by soft words? With men of an exceptional force of character and tact it *might* sometimes have been possible, but in nine cases out of ten soft words would be greeted with sneers, and taken as evidence of "cold feet." Lord help the officers who allowed their crews to get the upper hand of them!

Men and manners were rougher in those days, and things happened that would be almost impossible now. I will instance the then captain of the Port of San Francisco. He commanded for many years ships that well deserved the horrible name of "blood ships," and he was credited with amusing himself, when the men were working aloft reefing topsails or what not, by taking shots with his revolver at the last man up aloft!

The story of the *Almiranda* was gathered from the crew, and was as follows:

There had been bad feeling between the officers and the cook and steward from the first; the former was a negro, and the latter a mulatto. The race feeling was strong, and matters went from bad to worse, the more so as the coloured men resented the constant cuffs and kicks with which they were saluted at every turn; they

could do nothing right, and the captain vowed he'd make his ship a hell for them. One night, the steward disappeared, how, no one quite knew. One of the watch heard a cry for help, but he was so accustomed to this sort of thing that he took no notice; but the next morning there was no steward. The murder of the unfortunate man did not alleviate the lot of the wretched cook, who was at length driven to desperation when attacked one day by the captain with a handspike; he drew his sheath knife in self-defence. The mate ran out of the cabin to see what was the matter, and seeing the position rushed back again and reappeared with a cutlass with which he struck at the negro, cutting his right side open. At the same moment the wretched man was felled by the captain. With inconceivable brutality the wound in his side was stitched up *with a palm and needle and sewing twine* (implements used for making or mending sails). As a matter of course the wound festered; but even this was not an end to the horrible torture inflicted on the poor wretch, he was chained to the mizen-mast and left there night and day. It was not for long though. Before he died they threw him overboard, with some brutal remarks on "stinking niggers."

The vessel I myself joined at 'Frisco had some claims to the title of a "blood ship." The *Golden Gate* hailed from Baltimore; she was of eleven hundred tons register, full rigged with a crew of some twenty-two hands. She was bound in ballast to the Chincha Islands—where the guano comes from—of —— well, not the blest, but the damned. We did not get there, however, as a little matter detained us at Callao, which led to all the crew, save the officers, clearing out. We were a mixed lot in the forecastle, for among them there were two ex-captains, or at least mates with captain's certificates, a Portuguese, an ex-English apprentice, myself, and the son of a Boston merchant, a clever, well-educated lad. I had shipped as A.B.; we were all A.B.'s more or less, some of us less; and we had several of the hardest cases I had ever met in the whole of my life.

Our captain looked like a respectable churchwarden or well-to-do business man; no one would ever have taken him to be a seaman when on shore. He scarcely ever spoke to the men directly. The mate was rather a fine fellow; the second mate—a Missourian—was a giant and a brute. They had got a lot of toughs to deal with and they were going to master them.

Afternoon watch below was abolished, and

anything and everything done to make work. At night if one of the hands was seen to sit down, it was: "You, there, take a pull on the lee braces. What in the —— do you want next, sofas to sit on?" The huge Missourian would not brook any back-talk, at even a resentful look his ponderous hand would go to the nearest belaying pin. For making him repeat an order twice, he split open the head of one of the seamen with an iron pin! Why all this was done I could not understand, as there was nothing to be gained by it. The hands, or rather the scoundrels of crimps who had shipped them, had drawn two months' advance pay before the ship left 'Frisco, and there was no need to make life unbearable in order to run the crew out at the next port, so that the skipper could collect their arrears of wages, as was often the custom. However, on putting into Callao, matters came to a head by the crew knocking off work. For various reasons, I and another did not join them, principally because we had personally nothing to complain of. The others were all shut up in the forecastle on a diet of bread and water. This state of things lasted for some days when, in response to the repeated requests of the crew, the captain went ashore and brought the American Consul on board to hear their complaints.

I was aft at the time painting a highly-picturesque eagle on the bows of one of the ship's boats and heard and saw the proceedings. On one side of the quarterdeck stood the captain and his officers, on the other side the crew; in the centre the U.S.A. Consul who gravely listened to the complaints of the men, and heard what the officers had to say in reply. The man with the broken head took off his hat to show the scar of his wound; and the young Bostonian, well educated and fluent in speech, eloquently described the constant nagging and bullying of the crew, to which confirmation was given by the others with considerable heat. I do not know what the Consul had to say to the captain, or whether what followed was done with his sanction or approval, but the fact that he left the men to the mercy of the officers showed that he did not see things from their point of view; or it may be that he advised the captain to make the best of matters and get shot of such a mutinous lot of scallywags.

After he had gone, the officers proceeded to their business; they went aloft and unrove one of the topsail sheets which they took down the 'tween decks, and fastening a couple of tackles on to the stanchions, hooked them on to the chains. When darkness fell, arming themselves

with revolvers and carrying ship's lanterns, they went to the door of the for'ard house on deck. Opening it half-way, they ordered the men out one at a time, and as they came out slipped handcuffs on their wrists. There were present the Captain, two mates, carpenter and sail-maker; the men who had "knocked off" numbered some dozen. I wondered afterwards what would have happened if they had let them out together. One ruffian used to relate how in a rough-and-tumble he had bitten off the nose of a newly-married mate of a ship he was in, and said with a laugh that he was sorry for it afterwards, when he thought of what the man's wife would say to him on his return home. Well, the men were all marshalled on the deck handcuffed, at the mercy of half-a-dozen armed men ready to shoot right away. No troubling the shore authorities on such matters in those days. The mutineers were driven below like a flock of sheep, and then I perceived what the tackles and topsail sheet were meant for; the latter was passed under the handcuffs between the arms of each man, the tackles hooked on, and in a few seconds the whole dozen were triced up in a line, with just the tips of their toes touching the deck, and left there. It was all done in a quiet, orderly way, with but an oath

or two, as though it were an every-day occurrence.*

The agony of some of the shorter men was intense, but luck came their way. One of the men, with smaller wrists and hands than most, succeeded in slipping out of his manacles, and, groping his way to a part of the hold where he knew there were some empty barrels, quietly rolled a number over to where the men were, thus enabling them to sit down and relieve the strain. He then found where the tackle was fastened, let it go and unhooked it. Then followed a consultation as to what was to be done next, as with the exception of this man they were still handcuffed. Eventually they decided to do nothing, and throwing themselves on some empty sacks went to sleep. In the early morning one of them went on deck and came back with the report that there was no one in sight, but there was a "runner's" boat under the bows.

The whole crew thereupon decided to go off; another boat appeared, and with the assistance of the "runners" their kits were packed and they were rowed away to the shore.

I formed the opinion that the "Old Man" had deliberately planned the business with the

* This punishment is still in force in South America. I saw an Indian undergoing it in Captain Besley's film, "From the Pacific to the Atlantic."

"crimps," and perhaps had made money on the transaction. Had it not been so, there was nothing to account for the "runner's" boats being so opportunely at hand and the officers being so conveniently out of the way when the men were transferred to the boats. It seemed to me that the captain did this rather than risk taking the crew to the Chinchas, after what had happened.

After the men had left the ship, Harry, the youth from Boston, and I decided that we would no longer remain in a ship whose officers were capable of such brutality, while the stories we had heard of the Chincha Islands did not encourage any wish in us to go there. When a convenient opportunity occurred, we hopped over the bows into a crimp's boat, which happened (?) to be hanging around.

On reaching the crimp's den, we met the remainder of the crew. Some of them we found had been shut up for four or five days in an old hulk in the bay and the "runners" had made away with the "bags" containing their garments. There was no redress for them, even if they could have proved that the crimps were the thieves as, according to the rules of the port, sailors were not supposed to be ashore, unless on some business connected with a ship lying in the bay; and had the robbed men kicked up a fuss,

all that the boarding-house boss had to do was to hand them over to the authorities as deserters from their ship. They had a very simple and drastic manner of dealing with runaway sailors, for close to the Customs House were stocks of the real old-fashioned brand, into which the unhappy seamen would be fixed, with an armed *viligante* standing guard, until such time as a ship's captain, who was short of hands, should stroll along and pay the fine that was levied on runaways, and take him, or them as it might be, away to his ship. The crimps, to my own knowledge, acted in this way with anyone who made himself difficult or whom they couldn't ship in reasonable time.

Our boarding-house keeper was a fat, evil, tallow-faced Cockney Jew, and his runners were a couple of Irish ruffians, dangerous even to look askance at. Every now and then these boarding-houses were in danger of being raided by the port authorities, but the spies of the crimps invariably discovered the day fixed for the raid. They used to say, "That damned Dago is wanting a new suit of clothes again, blast him," thus referring to the captain of the port, who was noted for the splendour of his uniform and the whiteness of his linen. Then it was up-stick and away, for every man-jack of our den! We were

THE "KEARSAGE" IN THE PACIFIC.

armed with packs of cards, and a bottle or two of pesco—the national poison—and packed off to the pampas at the north side of the city, and there we'd stay every day from early morning until dark, when matters had settled down. We did not mind it at all, in fact, we enjoyed these outings immensely.

In the evenings of the quiet days, Harry and I haunted the Esplanade whereon a military band discoursed sweet music; with the exception of the bandmaster the performers were all negroes, for the negroes, like the Hebrew race, are, as a rule, born musicians. As the Plaza was indifferently lighted, when one looked towards the band all that was visible were the whites of the eyes of the performers and the glitter of their brass instruments; they played well I thought, but it looked weird!

Then came a day when the U.S. sloop of war, the *Kearsage* appeared in the bay. To the present generation the mention of this name means nothing, but there was a day when the whole world rang with it, and her fight with that scourge of the seas the *Alabama* takes rank in naval history with the duel between the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake*.

We have more reason than any other nation in the world to remember this celebrated fight,

saving that one to which the two ships concerned belonged—as the Government of the United States brought pressure on England—where the *Alabama* was built—pressure known as the "Alabama claims." We had to pay to the extent of £5,000,000 for the damage done by the Confederate sloop of war to the mercantile marine of the Federals. The fight took place off Cherbourg on June 19, 1864, and it lasted some minutes. The *Kearsage* could outsteam and outrange the *Alabama* and with her two great guns, 200-pounder Dahlgren swivel guns, could pound her well.

The *Kearsage* had been cruising for over two years before her arrival at Callao; she had, among other places, visited Australia, and had called at some of the South Sea Islands, where she had lost a number of her crew by desertion, and by the return of time-expired men to the States, so they wanted these replaced by fresh hands.

This was an opportunity for the crimps of Callao, and, in company with others, I visited the U.S. Consul, at whose office we filled in papers in which, amongst other things, we inserted the name of the place where we were (not) born (it was necessary that we should be natives of the United States, or naturalised citizens), but the Consul did not let trifles like

that interfere with things. I was entered as "Henry Edwards, born at Baltimore." I did not give my right name because I had, of late, grown very particular as to who handled it.

We went straight on board the *Kearsage* and were examined by the doctor. I passed all right, and was drafted into the stoke-hold, wherein was the greatest need for men. Later on, I wondered that they had any left at all!

Half of the crew, or thereabouts, had shipped in the Eastern States as "landsmen"; many of them I should say had never seen a ship before they joined up; some, I have no doubt, were wanted by the police, and others had got into trouble in more ordinary ways. Nearly every nation of the world was represented, but they were all "American citizens," particularly several deserters from the British Navy, and all the Irish.

By the way there was a good yarn told with regard to Irish-American citizenship. It happened that an emigrant ship was about to enter Boston when the sound of a gun was heard, the music of bands was also wafted to them; from the ship they could see flags galore flying. The steerage passengers were at the time down below, mostly packing previous to landing, and one of these—an Irishman—was standing by doing nothing, so he was asked to go on deck and see

what all this noise, etc., was about. Presently he returned in great excitement, shouting, "It's the fourth of July, bejabers, and we are celebrating the day when *we* kicked all you Englishmen out of *our* country."

The *Kearsage* was a fine-looking craft of the period, barque-rigged, with auxiliary steam power. When she was first built she could do her sixteen knots under steam, a great speed in those days. What she could do at the time I joined her I found out later, for during the months she lay at Callao she was only out two or three times for gun practice and went and returned under sail.

Month followed month, but there was no liberty for any of those who had joined her at Callao; the crimps had taken two months' pay in advance, and we had to pay for all our outfit, so that it was long indeed ere we were entitled to any money.

We were lying there when the Fenian invasion of Canada took place; there were quite a number of Irish on board, some of whom received telegrams from the United States containing news of the "great advance"; every village the "Army" advanced through became a city, and "the British lion is shaking in his boots" was a common expression in use. Then, after terrific

skirmishes, the British forces, i.e. the Canadian Militia, and the Fenian "Army" met in a "great battle." There was enough smoke and noise to frighten even the crows away from the vicinity, but just as they were all enjoying themselves, an appalling outrage took place! Owing to the representations of the British Ambassador, Congress had been informed that it was hardly "cricket" to allow American citizens to be armed and organised in the States and march into a "friendly country," and presently on the field of battle appeared a cab containing a "Marshall," who had in his pocket a writ for the arrest of the Commander-in-Chief of the Fenian Army. Making inquiries he arrived among the staff officers, and sorting out the Commander-in-Chief he popped him into his cab and drove off with him. The "invading army," without waiting to be more severely drubbed, marched back into the States and was disbanded. Thus was Canada saved to the British Empire!

Whilst passing these dreary months at Callao on the *Kearsage*, I found an occupation that relieved the deadly monotony of existence; I took up the gentle art of "scrimshawing," i.e. engraving on highly-polished whale's teeth. It was very simple; with a sharp knife—or, if you

could get it, a lancet was preferable—fixed firmly in a wooden handle, you cut in your lines, with extra pressure for any deep shading that was desired. It was exactly like dry-point etching, except that you had no dark ground to work on in the case of scrimshawing. The results were seen only after completion, when Indian ink was rubbed into the "cuts." Without doubt it is an entrancing art, though requiring great patience. After much practice I could copy a portrait from a "daguerreotype," and even a full-length figure, carte-de-visite size, so that they were not only recognisable, but good facsimiles. I never earned any cash though through my efforts; the only return I remember receiving for my work was some vile language from a man, after I had spent a week doing something for him, as I had lost a tool he had lent me, which was worth quite four cents!

Much fame came my way, however, as I copied some of the officers' photographs—ladies mostly—for them, and whenever we had visitors on board, my works of art used to be trotted out.

The only quiet place on board of the ship were the empty bunkers, which were greatly in request for small and select bodies of gamblers. When they had no money they would gamble

for clothes or boots—anything, in fact, that they could draw from the purser. The winner would be round and about selling these at prices vastly lower than the amount the losers would have deducted from their pay later on.

There was a big patch on the funnel where a shot had gone through in the action with the *Alabama*, there were also other evidences of the fight here and there; the rings on which the cable chain had been suspended to protect the boilers and engines were I think removed. The then Commander was a lieutenant at the time of the action, and there were others also who were on the ship then.

At last orders came for us to leave Callao; we were to go to the Naval depôt up the Sacramento River in California, to be paid off, after making a call at Honolulu, and having a look round a specified area in the North Pacific to verify the statement of the skipper of some ship who had reported the existence of a Volcanic Island, brand new and smoking hot. Everybody on board was wild with excitement at the prospect of leaving, and when we got to sea we understood why we had not been cruising about, for the ship rolled dangerously under sail—and under steam?—well, it was only a despairing hope on the part of the engineers

that she would be able to use her engines for part of the return journey.

She had been constructed, I understood, solely to deal with the *Alabama*, and everything had been sacrificed to this purpose; hence her enormous armament and shallow draught. The bunkers had been arranged to protect the boilers, and coaling in consequence was heavy work; and other matters of external and internal fittings had also been designed to this end.

The day we sailed was gloomy, and as there was no wind we proceeded to get up steam. Having escaped freezing to death round the Horn, the fates which pursued me had determined to try roasting, and to make sure work, if that failed, of scalding to death.

We then discovered the truth of the report that since the Civil War the strictest economy in naval matters had been in practice, for we were almost out of fire bars to replace those that were burnt out, which meant for us the drawing of ashes or mostly partly burnt coal all day long. It was a most difficult task to get up steam, and the conditions under which we worked were terrible in the extreme. The boilers leaked badly, and the bunkers were full of steam, with inches of hot water on the floors. Some of these bunkers were about six feet

square, and amidst the steam and hot water in one or two of these, we would stand on lumps of coal, shovelling it through a sliding door, in the knowledge that if the coal slithered down the doorway would be blocked, and that if the bunker plate on deck was not removed you would have three different ways of passing to glory. When a bunker plate was removed steam would pour out as if from a funnel—and we were in the tropics! The men on deck were lying in the shade under the forecastle to get out of the blazing sunlight, and away from the hot deck; we, of the black brigade, would occasionally manage to stagger up for a breath of air, then stumble forward and fall gasping for a few brief minutes; the furnaces, with their burnt-out fire-bars, devoured the coals ravenously, and if we did not keep the stokers supplied quickly enough there would be no steam, while there was the cursèd, everlasting hoisting of ashes. The formerly famed flyer could do no more than get up four knots, or at the most, five, with a great effort.

While I am engaged in describing the joys we experienced on that voyage, I should mention that before we reached the Navy yard, our final destination, we'd had a good part of the crew down into the fire-room, as amateur stokers

and trimmers—they were then called "coal passers." Sick bay was full of those who had done their bit—some a very small bit—in the stokehole, and they were passing in and out of the doctor's hands quite freely. I had the satisfaction of going through with it from first to last, except for a short interval of two or three days, when I had to nurse a badly jammed hand.

I noticed that the fleshy men gave out first—the lean kind lasted better, and I was of the latter.

The feeding of the men was very indifferent, and the food was itself scanty enough. The biscuits were evidently made of potatoes, skilfully blended with a little sand or cement; there *might* have been a little flour (4 in grade) mixed with them, but it was not perceptible. It was strange, indeed, that whereas in the American merchant ships the men were fed well, as they were and are in the British Navy, the case was reversed in the U.S. Navy and the British merchantmen.

Can I ever forget the day when the smiling harbour of Honolulu opened out; and we passed through the entrance of the reef into the harbour. The reef was adorned by a number of Kanaka girls who were standing smiling and gazing on us. Splendid types they were, draped in bright-coloured linen or calico robes, with

garlands of beautiful tropical flowers round their shapely heads.

When the anchor went down off came boats laden with fruit, and, after months and months of hard and flinty biscuits, travel-weary pork and odoriferous beef, the pleasure with which we waded into melons, bananas, grapes, peaches, etc., can be imagined.

The whole place was smothered with flags on our arrival, for it was the first visit of the famous destroyer of the dreaded *Alabama* to the Pacific, and wherever there were Americans of the Northern party they fêted the crew of the ship, and demonstrated their patriotism by serenading parties, banquets, balls, etc. That evening we were the recipients of a serenade on a large scale; boats put off laden with songsters, some of whom chortled quite famously, and we on board took our revenge and burst into such melodies as "John Brown's body," "Carry me back to Old Virginny," "The Star-spangled Banner," and other patriotic ballads, but the finest episode was the performance of a man who, together with a cornet, was the sole occupant of a boat. I never heard anything finer; he was simply splendid, and made even "Yankee Doodle" sound like music. It was a beautiful moonlight night and still as death, every note

of his instrument rang out sharp and true; we were sorry, indeed, when we had to sling our hammocks.

The following day we were honoured with a visit from the famous Hawaiian—Queen Emma, who came aboard accompanied by her Consort, King Kamajama—(I think I've hit it!)—and some of the Court ladies. Her Majesty looked every inch a queen, one who would have graced any court; she might well have passed as an Italian princess, and had beautiful features. As for the King, he was a gigantic and fine-looking man, and the ladies who accompanied them were in every way worthy of the royal couple. Then, in their honour, we had some gig and cutter races with another U.S. war vessel that was lying there. I helped to man the stake boat, and, if I remember rightly, we lost the races, and at their conclusion, by some extraordinary mischance, the boat I was in lost her way when returning to the ship, so we had to land to make inquiries; to make sure that we got the right direction we called at several houses, all of which, by another extraordinary coincidence, dealt in the sale of alcoholic fluids. Needless to say that one or two of us had some difficulty in ascending the accommodation ladder, and were remonstrated with by the ship's

corporal or one of the warrant officers; but as we mostly belonged to the "black gang," whose services would again become most valuable, nothing further was considered necessary in the way of disciplinary measures.

The other U.S. naval vessel excited great curiosity aboard our ship. To all outward appearances she was simply an ordinary whaler. No guns were visible, nor was there a single thing to lead anyone to think she was anything but what she looked. She was a sailing vessel, barque rigged, and painted black, and it seemed incomprehensible that she was a ship of war until we were "made wise" as to her history by her crew.

It appears that some time back a Scots engineer, whilst on board an English steamer trading on the coast in the China Sea, mutinied, and, with the assistance of the crew of Malays and Chinese, had seized the ship and started as a pirate. He had made himself an evil reputation, extending from the north coast of China to the south Pacific Islands, where he was supposed to have one of his several haunts. Many efforts had been made to capture this ship, without avail, for she had a great turn of speed, and the pirate knew the labyrinth of the thousands of islands of the Polynesian Archipelago and the South Seas like a book.

Some ingenious soul, connected with the U.S. Admiralty, had conceived the idea of purchasing an ordinary whaler and fitting her with some eighty or ninety naval ratings, and some guns which could be concealed by the boats and the paraphernalia of a whaler's deck; and then sending her out to cruise on the routes favoured by the pirate, in the hope that they would fall across him. As a mere whaler he would take her for an easy prey, and come near enough to permit of her being sunk or disabled by a broadside from the hidden guns. She had been cruising round, the crew told us, for some nine months, during which time the men had not been allowed ashore for fear that they might give their secret away, as it was possible that the pirate had spies in most of the ports. The men had got so fed up and depressed with the monotony of their existence, and so homesick, that there had been an outbreak of sickness amongst them, so much so that the ship's doctor had informed the captain that he did not hope for convalescence until he could give the crew the news that the ship's nose was turned in a homeward direction. Hence their arrival at Honolulu, where most of the sick men were up and about a few days after they got in.

The record of this ship doubtless exists in the

archives of the United States Admiralty, and it should prove of interest in view of the revival of the "mystery ship" plan in the anti-submarine campaign of the Great War.

After spending a few more days at this earthly paradise, as Honolulu seemed to us, we went in search of the evasive volcanic island, but news of our coming had evidently preceded us, for though we cruised round for three days we found nothing. As it was mild weather, and there was no chance of a spill, we went under sail all that time, for which we in the stokehold were truly grateful.

On entering the Golden Gates at San Francisco we fired a salute which was not appreciated by a covey of seals who were on a little island; they tumbled off into the sea as smartly as a politician into a fat job, or a Hebrew into the post of manager of the Bank of England.

That night was a night of horrors.

I have already mentioned the fact that the coal bunkers of this ship were so arranged as to serve as protection for the boilers, but there was, in addition, a similar safeguard *over* the boilers. Between them and the deck was a space of some three or three and a half feet, in which there were a great number of iron struts connecting the deck beam and the boilers,

designed to keep the latter in position. Between these struts coal was packed which could, on emergency, be used to furnish supplies for the furnaces. The emergency came on this last lap of the three years' cruise. We had burnt up, I daresay, a six months' supply since we left Callao, and our bunkers were practically exhausted. I was one of the "forlorn hope" brigade on whom the duty fell to wriggle up amongst the struts and shovel the coal down. We were given short planks on which to lie, so as to keep us from contact with the boiler and being roasted. Never shall I forget that horrible experience; no one could go through it without making firm resolutions to lead a better life in order to avoid the possibility of enduring the pains of the eternal fires of the conventional hell! That at any rate was *my* thought as I worked in this inferno; others, I fear, were differently affected, for I heard a considerable amount of language of the kind which I understand is barred amongst the attendants of the Y.M.C.A. Institutions.

It was a pitch black night as we went up the Sacramento River on our way to the Navy yard, and the pilot was continually running us ashore on the sandbanks. There were so many cross currents that were quite lively at times that

the ship would be slewed round and the stern landed on a sandbank. We could not do much with the engines to help her, in spite of the furious efforts we were making to get at least one knot an hour out of her, against the current. Kedging was ineffectually tried to get her off, and at length the measure was adopted of assembling all hands on the forecastle and making them break into a Kanaka dance, and up would go some hundred pairs of legs and down and around, making the vessel shake from stem to stern; after a quarter or half-an-hour of this treatment the sandbank on which the vessel had rested had been churned into fragments and was on the way down to San Francisco Bay.

It is quite impossible for me to remember all the details of that eventful night. I was too much occupied in trying to find out whether I was roasted, baked, or steamed, and everything appeared in a haze, but what I do know is that we *did* arrive at the Naval dockyard, and whether it was days, weeks or months since we'd left the briny ocean I could not say; it was one long, dreadful nightmare.

We lay in the river all the day after our arrival, nobody moving an inch during that period, except under compulsion. That night we were again serenaded and in good style, for they

brought off glee singers who coughed, grunted and squealed in the way usual to glee singers. Then appeared a huge raft with a whole orchestra, with big drum, bassoon and bass violin complete. It was famous, and we again lifted up our voices and chortled in retaliation.

The following day all hands were passed on to the historic *Independence*,* an old wooden line of battleship. If I remember correctly we were to be paid off on the following day, and we had a whole day to ourselves to wander about anywhere within the yard; ninety per cent. wandered off to the canteen, and spent hours in the hopeless task of trying to get drunk on the lager beer that was sold there.

We were duly paid off, most of the men going to the Eastern States, and the more recently shipped ones to San Francisco. Those who had joined at the other side for the cruise had their passage paid back.

San Francisco of 1868–9 was a curious place. The side-walks were composed of logs of wood or railway sleepers laid side by side, and of roadways there were none as a rule. A great fire came along in after years, and on the ruins rose the magnificent city that was afterwards wrecked by earthquake.

* My memory may be at fault as to the name of this fine old hulk.

SERENADING THE U.S. SLOOP "KEARSAGE" ON HER ARRIVAL AT THE PACIFIC NAVAL YARD.

Down by the bay it was really picturesque; wooden shanties ran out on piles, often the habitat of the boarding-house sharks. In the time of the gold digging they were most convenient, as a boat could be run underneath and a hocussed man dropped through a trap door into it; then off he would go, to be sold to the nearest vessel for a fabulous sum, for the bay was crowded with sailing vessels whose crews had sloped off to the gold diggings. Sometimes a dead man would be taken off and passed off as a "drunk." "Good man, cap.," would be said, "he'll be all right in the morning." Dangerous men were those hangers-on of the boarding-houses, and many a poor sailor found his way through these trap doors, with a bullet or two or a knife in him. Even when I was there I saw many of this kidney who looked as if a quarter of an hour's hanging would suit their complaint, and the world would be better for it.

The wharves were full of great holes, and as they were feebly lighted it was a dangerous place for any drunkard in the dark. One night I came across a little knot of people standing round a hole. I joined them, and saw men with a lantern down amongst the piles that supported the wharf. I asked, "Has someone fallen down?" "Yes," was the gruff reply,

and just then, casting my eye to one side, I noticed a man coming up to join us who was staggering somewhat, and evidently wet through. "Wa's the matter, boys?" he exclaimed, as he drew near; and we all turned to look at him. "Come up, boys," cried someone to the searchers, "here's the ——— galoot hisself come along to ask us what's the matter!" And with a laugh we all dispersed.

Another incident that I witnessed was of an extraordinary character. One day an elderly man, sitting on the edge of the quay fishing, evidently had a fit, for when he fell into the water he floated on his face, without moving. He was collared by a man in a boat and taken under the bow of a ship moored alongside the wharf. Someone on the forecastle lowered a bowline to haul him up, and the Dutchman in the boat, in his haste, put it round the insensible man's *neck*, and those on deck began to haul away before they saw what he had done.

By-and-bye it was a ship again for me, and as I'd had enough of knocking around the Pacific, I managed to join a barque bound to England, on which I shipped as ordinary seaman. On the night we went on board the whole crew were suffering from the effects of some vile alcoholic beverage that made them fighting

mad, and men who had never seen each other before were at it hammer and tongs, enjoying themselves, to all appearances, mightily.

However, next morning, although black eyes and swollen heads were plentiful, everyone had forgotten all about the previous evening's frolics! and were as friendly as need be. We had a fair passage, for the winds, as usual, were favourable for homeward-bound ships round the Horn, and it was not until we were off the Irish coast that anything of note happened, when, to relieve the monotony, we ran into a fog, and our ship bid fair to ram a perpendicular cliff in the vicinity of Kinsale Head. Fortunately for us, the fog lifted just in time to prevent us damaging the Emerald Isle, and piling our ship on the rocks. It was a toss-up whether we could save our ship, for we were within half a cable's length of a tough proposition—no beach, and deep water right up to the face of the cliff. Fortune favoured us, however, and we brought up safely in Waterford, where we went to await orders.

CHAPTER IV

WRECKED OFF ST. BEE'S HEAD

In due course our orders came for us to proceed from Waterford to Whitehaven, there to discharge our cargo of grain. We left the Irish coast in very dirty January weather, with a high wind, rain, hail and fog.

We fought our way across the Irish Sea, and arrived off the coast of Cumberland with a hard nor'-easterly breeze blowing. In the afternoon we sighted a large fishing craft, and our skipper signalled her that he wanted a pilot at once; she lay to and when we came within speaking distance, they said they would put a man on board of us to pilot the ship into Whitehaven for £7. Our captain thought it too much, and offered £3, but eventually advanced it to £5. The skipper of the smack, losing patience, let fly his foresheet and got under weigh, leaving us to our own devices. It proved an expensive bit of bargaining for us, and could

our skipper have foreseen the sequel he would cheerfully have paid an extra £2 rather than have lost assistance by haggling over that paltry amount.

It was beginning to get dark, dusking in fact, owing to the rain and fog, and we could see very little ahead; no lights were visible on the coast, and as we had been expecting to pick up for some time St. Bee's Head light, the mate went up on the fore-yard to look out for the beacon, whilst the skipper went below to have another look at his charts. The feeling that all was not well spread heavily amongst us, for it was apparent that our skipper was at sea in every sense of that term. These forebodings of coming trouble were soon realised, for presently we heard the mate shout, "light on the port bow!" and we knew that it was St. Bee's Head, and that the light should have been on our starboard beam! The skipper rushed on deck as the news was passed down to him, and he had scarcely reached the poop when there came a shock and a stagger, and someone cried, "she's struck!"—quite unnecessary tidings to those who had been sent flying and had measured their lengths on the deck, or been thrown against the bulwarks.

The wind just then was blowing off the land, and the first thing we did was to haul round

her yards, and throw the sails aback, but it was of no use; she had stuck too fast. The long boat was then got out, and a kedge (small anchor) dropped off the port quarter. After a lot of heaving, this, with the assistance of the sails, proved effective, and we found ourselves afloat again. But alas! it was not for long, as the order to haul round the yards again was unfortunately given too soon, and she struck once more farther north. This time she could not be budged, and the wind was veering round to the nor'west.

We had a confabulation for'ard as to what to do next; a tall and sinewy Irishman taking the lead. We had lost all confidence in the after-guard—and had come to the conclusion that the only seaman there was the mate, but that he was too old for his job. We therefore decided that it was up to us to take matters in hand and carry on.

The lifeboat was alongside, and the men discussed whether they would take this boat and make an effort to get to Whitehaven, with a view to getting a tug boat to come and try and get the ship off. Some of them thought they ought to do so, but others thought they would come to grief if they tried. I left them at it, for I was tired out and very sleepy, and decided

to seek the shelter of the galley where there was a fire, and try to get a little sleep, but, with a forethought remarkable in one so young, I hauled a pair of very natty Wellington boots from under my berth and put them on. I augured that if I was to be drowned I would at least do my best to make a respectable-looking corpse, and if I was to be saved, then I would have a fine new pair of boots—purchased at Waterford and made to order.

I duly reached the galley without being noticed by anyone, and went in, pulling the sliding door to. After poking up the fire I lay down on the cook's bench, and in a couple of shakes was in the land of dreams.

There came a rude awakening; how much later I knew not, but I was sent flying, and struck the galley floor hard, then I heard and felt the grinding and rasping of the bottom of the vessel on the rocks as she rolled furiously. It was pitch dark and evidently some of the aloft gear had fallen and knocked off the galley funnel, blocking up the aperture, for the place was chockfull of smoke. I groped about in the suffocating smother until I found a door, and, frantically pushing it open, I staggered out, gasping for breath. I gazed around in amazement; they were burning flares and blue lights

on the poop, and I could see men clustered around the starboard rigging engaged in hacking away the shrouds or their lanyards, in preparation for getting shot of our masts. As the ship rolled I could see the water pouring over the bulwarks; I afterwards learned that the wind had increased to a gale and veered round to the westward; the tide had risen fast, bringing with it a heavy sea. A signal gun had been fired repeatedly in the hope of getting assistance.

Still only half awake, I made for the poop, and scarcely knowing, in my dazed condition, what I was doing, ran up the mizen rigging, but when only half-way up to the cross-trees I heard someone yelling that the masts were going over the side, at which I sprang out of the standing rigging, and, clutching a loose rope, dropped down to the deck like a spider from its web when a wasp pays it a call. It was well for me that I did so, for I had hardly touched the deck before the mainmast went by the board, carrying with it the mizen mast. On this some of our hands made a dive below into the cabin, perhaps in search of liquor, or affected by a blind panic, but they were called up at once as the sea was now coming over the poop and the companion doors had to be closed.

Then followed a dreary interval ; all the crew were now on the poop, for there was no friendly mizen rigging to climb into. The ship, I suppose, had been driven off the rocks deep into the sand, for she was now steady, with a slight list to starboard, and we were all clinging to the poop rail. Every minute, however, the tide was rising, and the waves were threatening to tear us from our hold. It was evidently only a question of time when they would succeed.

Then a brain wave came to someone ; why not make for the for'ard part of the ship? So far as anybody knew, the foremast was still standing, and, anyhow, that part of the vessel was higher out of the water than the after end! But we knew the chance of getting there was very doubtful as we peered into the black night and watched the waves as they poured in amidships, making a plaything of the mass of tangled rigging and broken spars. We could only guess at what lay beyond, for nothing was visible save close at hand, when the waves amongst the wreckage broke into white foam on the deck below the poop. To drop down amongst the wreckage and risk being caught by a wave seemed suicidal! Then again, for all we could see there might be no foremast? or it might

even be that the fore part of the ship had ceased to exist!

The man who took the bull by the horns and who, after watching a great wave recede, dropped down on to the main deck, was a hero! In a couple of seconds he had disappeared to view, but after the next wave had gone he was followed by a bunch of two or three. We did not know their fate—they were simply gone! The blackness of the night was greater than any I've ever experienced. As the next wave all but carried us overboard, it was evident we should have to make the journey ourselves, and it was time to get moving. It was indeed a weird experience. Frantically leaping and wading, we pushed our way to the for'ard end of the ship before another wave broke, and found the foremast still standing, and lashed to the standing rigging were the men who had preceded us on the venturesome journey—save he who had been the first to make it. I found him later, after I had climbed out to the end of the bowsprit, where I lashed myself to the stay. He had fastened himself in "the head," the cross bars at the top of the cutwater. Why he had chosen this spot I know not, for, although he was sheltered from the wind, when the waves broke aboard they rushed over the forecastle

and a veritable cascade descended on him. When his head emerged from the welter he would express himself in the most awful language.

As for me, perched up as I was on the bowsprit, I looked down on the man, like unto the cherub that sits up aloft and looketh down on poor Jack. I had managed somehow to secure one of the two or three lifebelts that were on board, and when my neighbour had a lucid interval he persistently advised me to make a jump for it. This advice I, as persistently ignored, and when morning broke it appeared as if I was fully justified in so doing, for the light revealed a rocky shore which undoubtedly I should only have reached in fragments. Up the rigging were the rest of the crew; the only voice came from the ship's youngest apprentice, who was praying; at least what was blown to me at intervals appeared to me prayers; and the only comfort that came their way was from the old mate, who was the possessor of the last plug of tobacco that we had left; this he passed at intervals to the others to take a chaw from. The hours seemed interminable, and it is always a marvel to me that we managed to retain our hold for so long. Nature is sometimes merciful; men can suffer so far and no farther; and when the limit is reached death is an easy matter.

Speaking from my own experience, I know that if I had dropped into the sea I was quite incapable of lifting a hand to preserve my life, so numbed was I both in body and mind.

Matters had about reached their blackest when there came from landwards the shrill sound of a locomotive whistle, and, turning eagerly in the direction whence it came, we could distinguish sparks flying from the engine funnel, then the lights of the carriage windows. It was indeed the dawn of hope, as well as of a new day! Surely we could not be allowed to drown with help so near, and daylight breaking! It was not so easy now to pass out on the long journey, and still less so when the cold grey light of dawn revealed a village lying in flat country, with a railway station and telegraph posts! Our revulsion of feeling can be imagined. Our despair when no response was made to our distress signals; our hours of misery in the darkness; our joyful hope when we saw the near evidence of civilised activity.

The tide was falling most certainly, and the question that agitated us was should we be taken off before it rose again? In the growing light, what a scene of desolation our vessel presented! Then our eyes turned to the beach, and we saw the second evidence of life—the figure of

SHIPWRECKED OFF ST. BEE'S HEAD.

a man strolling down from a cottage, which stood apart from its fellows on a sandy waste opposite the ship. He looked at us, or appeared to do so, then he sat down and took out his pipe, which he slowly lighted. He was evidently thinking—and so were we. The tide had now fallen sufficiently to allow us to get down on the deck, and the man was probably thinking that our vessel had a cargo of lunatics on board, for we were dancing and jumping about, beating our hands and cutting all sorts of antics, striving to get some vitality into our frozen limbs, so as to restore some sort of a circulation. This achieved, we did not sit down and weep; no, the Irishman decided that we were going to make a raft; our boats were smashed, fragments of them possibly strewed the adjoining beach—and on that raft there would be volunteers; they would establish communication with the shore, and having done so would proceed to the railway station and get the stationmaster to wire to Whitehaven, asking them to send a lifeboat.

With feverish haste we set about making this raft; we had plenty of material to work with. The Irishman took charge of this job and bossed everybody, including his officers. It was a smart piece of work when finished, then volunteers

were called for, and everybody came forward. Selecting two, our new skipper saw them safely on the raft, which had just been launched, and we paid out a lot of log line to be landed, as the idea was for those on shore to haul a rope from the ship, the said rope to be attached to a rock, and on it we would scramble down to the shore in the event of a lifeboat not being forthcoming. But it did not work according to plan.

In the first place, before the raft had gone far the log line fouled some of the wreckage and had to be cut; then the sea took a hand in the game and the unfortunates on the raft were nearly torn off and drowned, and only the fact that they were well secured before starting saved them. The raft eventually got ashore some half-mile away, and its crew managed to reach the station. There they were informed by the stationmaster that there was no need to send for a lifeboat, as the ship, where she now lay, would be high and dry at low water.

We on board were anxiously waiting for news which came not, and as we were well aware that although the wind and tide had gone down, they might rise again—the latter certainly, so, we held a consultation as to what to do next. It was considered that someone should be able

VOLUNTEERS.

to swim ashore now with the log line, and establish communication, when it was discovered that the only person on board who could swim at all was the youngest apprentice, a youth of about fifteen or sixteen. He was, however, a plucky little chap and he volunteered, so we lowered him into the water and watched his progress with anxiety. He managed to struggle gamely through the breakers, and the man who had sat on the rock "thinking" all this time, got off his perch, waded in and pulled him ashore. Then they both took hold of the log line and pulled off a rope, which they made fast to a friendly rock. Down this one after the other of us clambered to land, most of us in a pretty bad case, some of us unable to walk. The Cambrian proved himself a man of resource and hospitality also, for he called his wife down, and together they half carried, half supported the worst cases up to their cottage. There we sat before a roaring fire and were filled up with hot tea and brandy. When our teeth ceased from chattering and our limbs and tongues moved freely once more we again went down to the beach to see how matters were faring there.

We found the ship high and dry as the station-master had predicted, and a crowd of people

engaged in loading carts with the cabin furniture and stores; perched up on the top of one of these I noticed one of our men, drunk as a lord and singing a ribald ballad.

We asked our Good Samaritan if he had not heard our signals of distress during the night, and he replied that he did hear a few bangs, but he thought he had left the inner door open and that it was their dog going about the house looking for its pups, which he had sold that day; also, he added, the wind was fit to "tear all up" and was making a terrible row.

It was a chilly day, and we spent it as might be expected. The village was a typical small watering place—a seaside resort for Whitehaven, Carlisle and neighbourhood, a place where the inhabitants mostly hibernate during the winter; living frugally, and waiting patiently for the summer season, when they can fall on their prey from the inland towns and unload them of their superfluous cash. In the usual manner, the coming of a wreck, with the promise it held of grate fuel for the winter, was satisfactory, and there were possibilities of divers kind of loot also.

Our captain had gone to the hotel and made arrangements with the landlady to cater for us and provide accommodation for the night, con-

templating sending us to Whitehaven the next day to be paid off.

So we duly made our way to this hotel, where we held a reception, and partook of considerable liquid hospitality and enjoyed the comfort of the same; no one, by the way, offered us a change of garments, and it took a considerable amount of the said beverages to make us forget that we were externally considerably damp.

The clergyman looked in in the course of the evening, and that describes it! for he just put in his nose, held up his hands and fled. Then it came to a question of beds. Be it remembered that we had only the garments in which we stood, for all our chests had been washed overboard with the deckhouse, and after our rough experience our working clothes made us look like tramps. Perhaps there was some excuse for the landlady remarking that her beds were fit for princes to sleep on, and she was not going to have ——— I had better not repeat what she did say, it was not complimentary, and it was lucky for her she was a woman! Our captain had guaranteed all our expenses, yet we were put to sleep in our half-dried garments in a barn. Thanks probably to the hotel's liquors, which were more generous than its landlady, we

slept like tops and were none the worse when daylight broke.

We left these inhospitable quarters next afternoon and went by train to Whitehaven. Our skipper had given us the name of an hotel where he told us he had made arrangements for "our comfort." We were to stay there until he had communicated with his owners and received the money to pay us off.

It was dark when we left the station and we asked the way from a sergeant of police, and told him who we were. He was very interested, and directed us to the place, but imagine our disgust when the landlord frankly refused to take us in. I forget the exact reason that he gave, but he ended up by calling a policeman to show us the way to a place that he apparently thought would suit us; and off we went shepherded by this policeman. We were led into an evil-smelling passage, and the constable opened the door of a disreputable-looking building, and we were ushered into a large odoriferous room with bare walls that somewhere in a remote past had been whitewashed. We were greeted by a hump-backed, forbidding-looking object who was holding a birch broom in his hand, whether to keep his collection of gutter ornaments in order, or as a symbol of authority,

I know not, but he was evidently "the boss." Sitting on benches around the room was a collection of wretched-looking tramps of the cadging, ballad-singing variety, area sneaks, etc., one or two of whom were cripples and one a bogus sailor. In front of the large fire a man was engaged in bandaging up an ugly sore on his leg, while another was toasting a herring.

After a few words with "Daddy"—as we found "the boss" was acclaimed by his clients—and without speaking to us the policeman retired and left us standing dumbstricken. We gazed round helplessly at the strange sight, whilst a blackguard with a shade over his eyes related some dirty scheme he had succeeded in, which met with laughter from all, particularly "Daddy." We were helpless, we had not a penny-piece in our pockets, but we felt that this was no place for us, and made to pass out into the dreary night again; "Daddy" rushed forward to bar our progress, when suddenly the door opened and in stepped the police sergeant to whom we had spoken outside the railway station, a Good Samaritan dressed in blue. "Hullo, boys," he cried in cheery tones, "what are you doing here?" We told him. "Well," he replied, "you can't and shan't stop here, or walk the streets. We're not all like that brute

at the hotel, follow me lads," and with the curses of "Daddy" ringing in our ears we filed out.

Our conductor led us to a quiet, old-fashioned inn, with a landlady of a very different type from the one of the previous evening, to whom the sergeant explained matters, finishing up with: "Mrs. ——, you can hold me responsible for their board," and then turning to our crowd continued, "now, lads, I leave you to behave well and be a credit to the house and my recommendation."

Then he shook hands with us and left. That night was a heavenly one for all; nothing was too good for us. I afterwards heard that the landlady said she had never had better behaved people in her house. On the next morning I met our mate, and, borrowing a shilling from him, sent a wire home, and the following day a registered letter reached me, and I left.

My wire was something in the nature of a surprise to my people, for they had heard nothing from me for a couple of years or so.

The experiences round Cape Horn and the effects of the wreck had somewhat broken my nerves and I decided that I had had enough of the sea, so returned to work at the School of Art at Newcastle.

CHAPTER V

THE CROSS-EYED CREW

THERE are many still living who can remember the time when it was almost as common to meet people who "squinted," were cross-eyed or "boss-eyed"—whichever term may be preferred—as it was to meet those who were deeply marked with the smallpox. That is all altered now; better care of babies, more skilful surgery and other matters have made it extremely rare to come across anyone so afflicted?? The time of which I write, half-way through the nineteenth century, it was common enough.

John Hobbs was so afflicted. At school his personal appearance was commented upon frequently and offensively; the plea that he himself was not responsible was not accepted. John Hobbs, therefore, took part in many personal encounters, wherein, if he was not too greatly outweighted, he generally came off the victor.

If he could not alter his own eyes he frequently changed the colour of those of his opponents!

John Hobbs later elected to go to sea, and the skill acquired through his school encounters was early brought into play. After a time his shipmates ceased to find mirth in the vagaries of his optics; his muscles had developed and his fists were as hard as iron.

He made progress, passed the Board for second, first, and then master, but in the various stages he always found it extremely difficult to get a ship; there was a tendency to look on him with suspicious eyes. What was the sense of taking a man as officer whose appearance excited the derision or mirth of the men? An officer who, whilst giving orders to one man might be to all appearances gazing intently on someone else, so leading to endless confusion!

But John took it all in good part. He was fond of the sea, and also of a very forgiving nature, and never, by any chance, bore malice after he had pounded a respect for himself into a would-be wit or a coarse brute.

But it was in vain that he haunted the shipping offices when he'd got his master's ticket, no firm would engage him.

At last fortune smiled on him, and he had a nice little legacy left him by an aunt, a dear old

soul, who, in his youth, had pitied him exceedingly.

"Now," he declared, "I'll have a ship of my own, and I'll take jolly good care that at sea, at least, there will be none to laugh at me."

It was an original idea, and cost something to carry it out.

First, he purchased a fine craft which was in the market, a full-rigged ship of some nine hundred tons register, the *Diana;* this he renamed the *Laddie Hilsdon*, for reasons to be related.

Then he went amongst the boarding-house masters, shipping agents and others, where his requests were received with much laughter; which was promptly checked at the sight of the expression on John's face, backed by his stalwart frame.

After considerable delay, it all ended as he wished, and the *Laddie Hilsdon* shipped a crew of eighteen souls and all of them, from the captain down to the ship's boy, squinted!

Before sailing, he paid a visit to the house wherein dwelt the young lady who bore the name that appeared on the Shipping Register in place of the *Diana*. She was not christened "Laddie," but that had been her pet name, for, when a child, she had been somewhat of

a tom-boy, and was as bright and saucy a young lady as might be met with in a month's journey.

John Hobbs asked her in a plain and manly way to marry him, for he was now in a position to keep a wife.

Her answer was decisive; she liked him as well or better than any man she had as yet met, but it was "No." Her eyes were soft and there was a distressed look on her face, as she thus replied. He guessed the reason, and, although the answer had not been unexpected, he went away with a heavy heart.

"The sea'll be all the home I'll ever have," he said briskly, and went to work to make his ship a model for all.

The men had comfortable quarters, plenty of good food, and books and games for recreation. There was a feeling amongst the men that they were fellows in affliction, and there was the best of good feeling between for'ard and aft. Orders were obeyed promptly, as they were all able to make allowance for obliqueness of vision, and none of the absurd mistakes that had made life a burthen to them all took place now.

They were much commented upon. The ship became notorious; first laughed at, then respected, for, apart from the science imparted to all hands by the captain who had daily bouts

with the gloves in fine weather, they were good seamen, and, like good seamen all over the world when well treated, they took their "Old Man" as a model.

Then a wonderful thing happened. They were lying in Manila when an old native paid them a visit; he did not laugh when he saw one cross-eyed man after another come into the range of his vision, but was extremely interested, and, through the Spanish interpreter, gave them to understand that he thought it was very foolish to make themselves conspicuous and objects of laughter, when the evil could easily be cured. His words were carried to John Hobbs, who asked the chief and interpreter into the cabin.

Briefly, it transpired that in the chief's village was a "medicine man" who did many marvellous things in the way of bone-setting, but what he did best of all was curing such cases as their's were on board the ship. With only his fingers and a few simple surgical implements of his own making he never failed.

Then and there a bargain was made: if the chief would allow his man to take the voyage to England, which would give him ample time to effect his cure, he could treat three or four patients at a time, and the captain would pay ten pounds per man cured, the chief to make

his own arrangements as to how much of this his follower got.

The offer was accepted and in a few days the chief came off with the man, a dried-up old specimen of a Filipino, with an abnormal-sized head and long sinewy fingers. It was arranged that the interpreter should sail with them. "Ah Ango," as the doctor was named, said it would take about three weeks to carry out the operation, and, therefore, some seven or eight Malay sailors were shipped to supplement the crew so that one-third of the latter could be under treatment at the same time.

All went well on the voyage and batch after batch returned to duty cured! It was very startling, and caused tremendous excitement on the ship. John Hobbs, when he was permitted to remove the bandage from his eyes, stood in front of the looking-glass. Lord! what a difference! The shifty treacherous look, which seemed to be an accompaniment of the oblique-eyed, was gone; he looked almost handsome, and had as straight and honest a looking face as anyone could wish to see. He smiled a little, for a letter received at Manila from his good friend Mrs. Hilsdon had cheered him up; Laddie had been moping ever since he left, and had refused a very good offer! He had written

off in reply saying he hoped to come back looking better, and would try his luck again.

Nothing of any other importance happened during the voyage home, but they had a remarkable reception when they arrived in the Thames and went into the West India Dock by the same tide.

The extraordinary hobby of the captain had somehow or other got into the papers, and afforded a considerable amount of merriment throughout the country. When, therefore, the *Laddie Hilsdon* got into the dock they found the berth where they were to be moored absolutely crowded with spectators, and before they got alongside, the ship was boarded by reporters and photographers. They, of course, thought it was a hoax, that they had got on the wrong ship, etc. Here was a crew with normal eyes, there was not a squint amongst them!

When Hobbs, to get rid of them, explained what had happened and brought out the interpreter and Ah Ango, they congratulated him profusely and consoled themselves for their own disappointment by interviewing the "medicine man" through the medium of his custodian, and he was photographed from every point of view, as indeed, was everybody connected with the ship, and they went off quite happy.

There was another visitor, one Dr. Von Seglemann, who took the captain to one side and offered him a cool thousand pounds if he would allow Ah Ango to show him how it was done, and give him the sole rights in the cure; he would bring a cross-eyed man for him to demonstrate on.

This gentleman was courteously shown over the side of the ship, and Captain Hobbs informed him that anything that was arranged in this direction would be for the benefit of these afflicted, whether they were rich or poor.

In a week or two a demonstration of the cure was given at one of the London hospitals to some of the leading surgeons by Ah Ango.

This is the reason why people with oblique vision are so seldom met in these days; the simplicity of the Filipino's methods placed the delicate operation within the capacity of any surgeon.

Need I add that Captain John Hobbs met with the reception from his lady-love that he had hoped and longed for?

CHAPTER VI

ON THE DOGGER BANK IN SAILING TRAWLER DAYS

I

One evening many years ago I met the late Admiral Beamish at the studio of a mutual friend in Bayswater, and in the course of a conversation on nautical matters from the artistic point of view the Admiral said to me: "Why do you not try the Dogger Bank? It would make an ideal sketching-ground for a marine artist. There are fine seas and magnificent cloud effects, and trawlers by the hundred; besides constantly passing ships of every nationality and description. As to the fishermen, you'll find no finer types of mankind anywhere, and if you want the dramatic effects—well, if you're there when there's half a gale blowing and go with the small boats 'boarding fish,' you'll get plenty of thrills." To this I replied, "I'd be very glad indeed to go, for from your description

I think it would be an ideal place for me, but how do I get there?" "Oh," said the Admiral "that's quite simple, get an invitation to stay on board one of the ships of the Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen. It can be managed; in fact, I am on the council, and I'll raise the question."

Some weeks passed and I heard nothing, but one day Mr. G. A. Hutchinson—then the editor of the *Boys' Own Paper*—happened to pay me a visit, and in a casual way I mentioned the conversation I'd had with Admiral Beamish. "Why," he replied, "I'm on the committee of the M.D.S.F., and we'd be delighted, I know, to have you as our guest. I will see Mr. Wood, the secretary, and get you the invitation." My friend was as good as his word, and in a few days I received a letter from the society's office, enclosing one to Messrs. Hewitt & Co., the owners of the steam "fish-cutters" that collected the fish on the Banks. Their headquarters, I was informed, were close to Shadwell Market—then in full blast—and the letter concluded by saying that if I went to the Dogger I'd have to be prepared to rough it. Well, I considered I had "had some" in my youth, and did not think that anything I should experience on a trip of this kind could be very terrifying. As

a matter of fact, I had to thank the M.D.S.F. for a most enjoyable experience.

Reaching Shadwell Market was an easy task, and stepping out of the street I found myself in a veritable Tom Tiddler's ground—gold, silver, copper galore here, there, everywhere; on counters, in drawers, and rough bags, which latter were being vigorously worked backwards and forward in streams of water by brawny fish porters, who wore long linen coats—which I noticed had no pockets! My first thought was that I had dropped on a gang of coin sweaters plying their fell trade in the light of day, but, on inquiry, it appeared that the banks refused to take the money that had passed through the adjoining market, until it had been cleansed.

Speaking for myself, and I think one or two others, this trifling matter would not have interfered with its passage to my pockets, had I been asked to "help myself."

The following day I found myself on board a "fish cutter" leaving the wharf. And I then and there set about sampling the "roughing it" as promised by the secretary of the M.D.S.F.

Firstly I descended into Hades—otherwise the "cabin"; it was very full, for there were others making their way to the fishing ground. So far as I could see there were about two berths

for seven or eight people, including the ship's officers. The heat was intense, and the ventilation apparently *nil*. All the perfumes were there. Bilge water, containing the concentrated essence of millions of departed fish, was in evidence, as too was the fragrance of the engine-room, together with that of damp garments belonging to the skipper and mate; these latter held their own fairly well against such powerful opposition.

I stole up the companion way, and before me stood a greasy, grimy ancient, whom I diagnosed as the cook, from the fact that he had a frying-pan in his hands—at least, in one hand, while with the other he was wiping it out with an awful-looking piece of cotton-waste which had evidently already done duty in the engine-room. This was the climax, and I fled. After this the simple life for me—biscuits and fresh air, and never more did I venture down that cabin!

Down the historic Thames we went—that gateway to the world. What a pageant of interest it conjures up!—Rotherhithe, Limehouse, Deptford, Greenwich, and away to Gravesend. Surely here is the cradle of Empire! Down this stream have passed adventurers and explorers, pioneers to new lands beyond the seas. What romance attaches to the banks of Father Thames—even before they

were occupied by the docks and other evidences of commercial enterprise!

At the date of my trip there were still existing many old inns which must have housed thousands of the founders of the Empire as they paused awhile on their way to or from the East and West Indies, to China and Australia. What tales their walls could unfold? One, I remember particularly, at Limehouse was quite unique, not only in itself but in its landlady, whom I always thought of as Miss Abbey of the "Fellowship Porters," in *Our Mutual Friend*; in fact, excepting that she would have been almost a child at the time Dickens wrote his novel, she might well have been the model for the portrait drawn by the gifted novelist.

My "Miss Abbey" was like the other in that she was the repository of all the cares and troubles of her neighbours, not forgetting their love affairs; she was held in great respect by the barge-builders and lightermen fraternities, and great at settling any of their little disputes, which they invariably carried to her. The riverside folk of those days were quite a distinct type. I always found them both civil and polite, and eager to do any small service for me.

Alas! it has altered somewhat. On the last visit I paid to this neighbourhood I found the

old inn transformed into the usual flaunting East End public house, while on my declining to answer some impertinent questions from a loafer, he confided to his pals that them sort of ——— ought to be chucked into the river, alluding to myself, who was engaged in the harmless occupation of sketching.

By the way, I might add that this inn had a passage that ran along one side of the house into a gallery which stood on piles in the river itself and which, in its time, had been used as a skittle alley. In the bar parlour was a window looking into this alley, and this window was faced by another, looking out on the river and the barge-builders' haunts, buildings and ship-ways, which was, and is yet, I believe, one of the quaintest and oldest nest of houses on the Thames.

It was to this parlour that I resorted for lunch. The lower part of the first window, to which I have referred, was of ground glass, and on this my "Miss Abbey" kept her accounts, or part of them. In an idle moment I made a copy of one or two items:

Ginger 3*s.* 6*d.* off.
Bill Tubbs another week 5*s.* 7*d.*
J. Shivery 17*s.* 9*s.* 2*d.* off.
Bella one quart, usual.
Stephen 3*s.* 5*d.* on to 7*s.* 5½*d.* last week,

and so on.

Some of these entries referred to small loans, which "Miss Abbey" informed me were always repaid, for although the surrounding community were mostly poor, they were very honest. She appeared to know the family history of everybody around, and was in great demand at weddings, funerals, etc.

There was another hostel, either in Shadwell or Wapping, I forget which, that dated from the Queen Anne period, and everything—bar fittings and panelling—was as originally fixed. In the taproom were some extraordinary paintings on the walls, representing scenes in foreign lands, one of which vividly impressed itself on my memory; it depicted a turbaned Turk astride a tiger; he held a drawn scimitar in his right hand and there was a background of palm trees.

The edges of the tables and wooden forms in this room were worn almost as thin as thread paper by the scrubbings of the generations of inn-keepers.

When once passing along a side street in Rotherhithe I came across one of the most antique specimens in the way of taverns that I had met up to that date. I went in to "investigate," and make inquiries as to its history, etc. The landlord did not know anything much about it, but he did tell me the following:

In his bedroom the walls were panelled, and shortly after taking over the inn he discovered, accidentally, that part of the inner side of the bedroom wall sounded hollow; his wife, on hearing of this, immediately jumped to the conclusion that the hollow place was the abiding place of a ghost, or, at the least, sheltered a skeleton, left by some careless person too lazy or indifferent to get buried in the usual manner, and the landlord was not allowed to rest until he had solved the mystery. There proved to be a small room opening on to some stairs which led down to a bricked-up door in a side alley—evidently relics of the days of the Press Gangs.

"Did you," I asked, "find anything in the recess?"

"Nothing," he replied, "except a lot of bundles of old papers, a hundred years or so, old, all about the history of Rotherhithe parish."

"And what became of them?" I eagerly inquired.

"Oh," was the reply, "the carpenters in the dry dock opposite got 'em from time to time to light their fires with."

Thus is history destroyed!

But to resume the story of my trip to sea.

On passing Greenhithe we saw Nelson's old

flagship the *Foudroyant*, a lonely hulk, at anchor, much hacked to pieces by the Germans to whom she had been sold—and then, in deference to public clamours, repurchased by our Government.

The sentimental outbreak regarding this relic of Nelson having died out she was left to rot, but, before she had time to sink at her moorings, she was disposed of for the purpose of being passed round the coast on show, finally ending her career at Blackpool, where she was wrecked during a heavy gale.

Deciding that I would rather make a meal of some dry biscuits than descend to the cabin again, and as the weather was quite warm, I determined to look for a place on deck whereon to lay my head, so I sallied for'ard, and stooping down inspected the space underneath the fo's'sle. To my joy there was a rush of fresh air through the hawsepipes that swept away the smell of fish and bilge-water, but there was also a collection of ropes, blocks, baskets, etc., which did not promise an excess of comfort. I crept underneath, however, and selecting the softest-looking coil of rope, I disposed it in a manner that I thought would be most comfortable; then, more joy, I espied a basket, lying on its side, in which reposed several onions—full strength.

My heart was filled to overflowing; these, with the assistance of the above-mentioned life-giving air, would keep me alive until morning. So lying down and inserting my head in the basket I sought for slumber—but alas, found it not! When day broke I discovered that we were on the open sea, and the steam cutter was beginning to show what she was capable of doing in a sea-way.

As we were now clear of all traffic the skipper got busy in his post office, sorting the various parcels and letters, and writing the names of the vessels for whom they were intended on a slate, afterwards hanging it in a place convenient for inspection.

The strong breeze dispelled much of the fragrance that had hung about the vessel, and she gave a rehearsal of what she could do in the way of "boosting" a road through the stormy seas, taking every now and then a header that sent a cascade of water flying over her high fo'c'sle, and at the same instant, so it appeared, staggering from side to side and dipping the stern almost under water by way of variety; but it was when she put on the "cinder sifter" action that she became really appalling!

We did not make the fleet that day, so, the sea having by then subsided, we downed trawl

when night came on, and I once more sought my roost. Needless to say, I did not linger on my luxurious couch, and before dawn I witnessed a trawl being hauled up. I noted that only the finer and larger fish were sorted out, the small fry being shovelled overboard; they told me that there is no waste, as what are returned to the sea are eaten by the others, so it amounts to the same thing in the end!

II

A few hours later the fleet for which we were working was sighted in the offing, running down in our direction as hard as it could pelt.

When within a certain distance from the fish carrier they lowered their boats, and these, laden with the trawlers' catch, made for this vessel.

I accompanied one of the boats, and a busy sight came into view—crowds of small boats surrounded the fish-cutters, hammering and battering against each other; whilst brawny and weather-tanned men were engaged in handling boxes of fish as if they contained feathers.

There is always an element of risk connected with "boarding fish" in rough weather, but after all is said and done, it is this riskiness that is the very salt of life.

Most of the fishermen I met seemed to be heartily amused at the fuss that is made about their calling—familiarity breeds contempt—and when you're up against things on The Dogger, as elsewhere, you just take danger as part of the game.

I found it very exhilarating, while perched up on the fish boxes, to make sketches from the fo'c'sle of the steamer; there was always a constant variety of incidents in progress, and particularly was this so when a heavy sea was on. Even the journeys out and home had their moment of peril, and sometimes I stumbled over the sheltering rail of the *Edward Birkbeck* with feelings perilously close to thankfulness.

The boarding went on, blow high, blow low; nothing in the way of weather interfered with it, and it was interesting to watch the cutters' men handing out empty fish-boxes to the waiting fishermen in their boats. Taking hold of a box, and awaiting the roll of the cutter, they would sling it in the direction of some boat whose turn it was; with the assistance of the wind—the force and direction of which is gauged to a nicety—the heavy boxes would reach their destination with unfailing regularity, and with the minimum of exertion. As the throwing is

BOARDING FISH ON THE DOGGER.

done with one hand, and the distance sometimes considerable, it appeared to me a wonderful feat of dexterity.

I was now settled on board the *Edward Birkbeck*, the mission boat, and as this had neither a trawl or a hospital aboard, I was very comfortable and undisturbed by the odour of fish or carbolic disinfectants.

The skipper's name was Budd, but he was much too full blown to justify it. His circumference more than equalled his height, which might have been some five feet. In other ways, too, he was an "all round" man. In the absence of missionaries he acted as preacher as well as choir-master. He modelled his style—or rather styles—in the preaching direction on the examples of clerics of different denominations who had frequented the vessels he had happened to be in. His delivery whilst preaching a sermon or singing a hymn was, to say the least of it, remarkable, his voice varying from falsetto to the deepest bass—from gentle and soft intonation to a bellow or a roar; his gestures passed from slow and easy movements of the hands to furious pounding of the structure that served as a pulpit, and, oh, if only I could depict the varied expressions of his expansive countenance!

This skipper also acted as physician, surgeon, and dentist, and of his prowess in the last mentioned capacity I had a striking example.

One day I noticed an unfortunate fisherman come on board the *Edward Birkbeck* from a trawler's boat; he was holding a handkerchief to his face, and appeared to be in great pain. I surmised correctly that he was suffering badly from toothache.

He followed our skipper below, and presently I heard a great scuffling, which lasted quite a long time, and then the poor man reappeared. Rushing to the bulwark, he cast off the painter, jumped into his boat and rowed away. I thought he looked like a man who'd had a fight with a wild cat and come off second best.

Nevertheless he turned up again in a few days, seemingly a wreck, and descended below; this time the scuffling and stamping continued for a still longer period than on his first visit. The very ship seemed to quiver and shake! Then up rushed the man holding his face with both hands, looking like a raving lunatic, his eyes fairly starting out of his head. Leaping over the bulwarks, he stumbled into his boat and rowed away as for dear life.

A minute afterwards the "dentist" himself emerged from the companion, puffing and

blowing, but with a look of triumph on his face; his jersey sleeves were rolled up, exposing his brawny arms, his right hand brandishing a pair of enormous forceps, in the nippers of which appeared a huge tooth attached to what looked like a small piece of a jawbone; this he was waving in the air, and then flourishing it in my face, he bawled, "Got 'im hout this time, Mr. Emmy! Got 'im hout!"

One day we sighted another mission ship, the *Alice Fisher*, and as we were out of tobacco and wanted someone to listen to our talk, we launched our boat and boarded her, and thereby made the acquaintance of that interesting personality, Captain Stubbs, R.N., the secretary of the Seamen's Hospital, Liverpool, and also—as this was a *real* hospital ship—a young medical man. The former had brought with him a lantern and slides, illustrating the slave traffic on the African coast.

The *Alice Fisher* was quite the latest thing in hospital ships, and well fitted in every way for its purpose. The doctor was very eager to get to work, and, I believe, spent his spare time in sharpening his saws and preparing splints, etc., for action. I suggested to him that our skipper might serve his turn, say, for an operation that would take off a considerable proportion

of his circumference and add it to his height. He, on his part, thought I might look better myself if he grafted some of the skipper on me whilst about it.

We were shown the bathroom, the library and other improvements, and I doubt not, there has been further additions in later days. The *Edward Birkbeck* was without question, much behind in every way.

We dined on board the *Alice Fisher*, and heard many yarns from Captain Stubbs regarding the slave trade, and later on the fishermen poured on board to see his slides and to listen to the lecture. They were a very lively lot indeed, as full of fun and mischief as schoolboys.

A matter which impressed itself forcibly upon me early in my acquaintance with the trawling-fleet was the unspeakably filthy condition of the crews; they looked as though they might not have washed from the time they started on the cruise. This I found, in a very little while, was not so much a matter of choice as of circumstance. The donkey engine for working the trawl was practically in their sleeping-quarters, and the funnel from its boiler belched out smoke and soot a bare three feet above the deck, smothering everything and everybody with a thick coat of grime. Then there was, of course,

the ever-present fish-slime which permeated every nook and cranny of the boat, and adhered to every inch of the men on her. No trawler could have carried a sufficient quantity of water to secure the men's personal cleanliness, even supposing there had been time at disposal for its use. As one man said to me: "In winter a good covering of dirt gives protection from the cold, and in summer an equally good one from the heat."

Water there was, but seventy per cent. of this went to the making of tea—of which each man consumed, on an average, a couple of gallons per day. One man boasted that his quota was thirty pints in the twenty-four hours! But doubtless this was merely a bit of vain-gloriousness. Anyhow, there the "tea" was—always on "tap." An immense kettle stood on the donkey boiler all through the day and night; it served the double purpose of kettle and teapot. A handful or so of tea was thrown in and the kettle filled. As it emptied, more tea was thrown in and a fresh supply of water given, a process which went on until the kettle was choked with leaves and, perforce, had to be emptied. It was a pernicious brew, drunk without milk or sugar from pannikins which held about a pint. I marvelled greatly that men who so indulged

were not nervous wrecks, or suffered from tanned livers, but apparently they were none the worse for it.

One old trawler informed me that at one time Barking Creek was the centre of the East Coast fishing trade, and that the fraternity migrated to Yarmouth and Lowestoft, taking their boats and prosperity with them. There is probably more tradition than history in this; but it presents Barking Creek in a more picturesque setting than one generally associates with it.

In due course we picked up the Red Cross Fleet, and on our first Sunday in its company I made the acquaintance of its "admirals." (Each fishing fleet has two skippers who hold this rank, and they control the movements of the whole fleet.) This admiral had no real appreciation of the dignity of his position, for he constantly alluded to himself as "poor little Freddy." His name was Frederick Newman, and he was about five feet two inches in height. We "took" to each other at once, and became great friends. He was a fine character, combining a deep religious feeling with a keen sense of humour, and as playful and full of practical jokes as the average boy. He brought with him to the services some splendid specimens

of Yorkshire fishermen, and, what is more, he preached the sermon himself. He did it well, too, and made a most picturesque figure with his iron-grey hair and rugged face lit up by the light from the open hatchway. We had from him a very vivid description of Moses in the wilderness, the uplifting of the brazen serpent being illustrated by very vigorous action on his part.

I attended the service on Sunday morning—held in the forehold—and was much impressed by the vigour with which the hymns were sung; the singing would have filled the Albert Hall—or emptied it? The men appeared very much in earnest, and one or two "experience meetings" which I attended further convinced me of this.

The hymns for the most part are sad doggerel, but the tunes are occasionally better, though for my own part I wished they had been taken from some of our old English ballads instead of from nigger minstrelsy and other dubious sources entirely unsuitable to religious services.

The weather now became too hot for words and the gathering of the fishermen on Sunday sent the temperature of the meeting-place up to a thousand or so in the shade. This was the last straw! Not only was my tympanum

severely strained, but the odour of fish became insupportable, so I used to sit near the alley-way leading aft, with the perspiration pouring down my face, and when I could stand—or sit—it no longer I would slink off into the cabin. One day, alas, I was spotted by the missionary who was holding the service, and he there and then publicly invited me to step forward, pointing the while to a seat—an upturned fish box—for'ard of the open hatch. I couldn't jib, so had to squat and listen to a prayer "*for the stranger within our gates.*"

At odd times, when the weather was fine and we were reaching with foresail to windward and going a knot or two an hour, I'd jump into our boat astern, and wait for the next ship in the line—we followed each other in line. I did not require any introduction. A rope would be hove to me, and I would step on board to have a pannikin of tea shoved into my fist, and there you were, or rather I was. Then, if it were meal-time, they'd trot out every little luxury they had in their lockers for my benefit, and if it were not meal-time they'd keep me until it was. It was good to be amongst fellow sinners once in a while. In return I would invite them to come and see me on board the Mission ship, and some of them actually came.

One day I became the guest of "Poor little Freddy," the Admiral. On boarding his vessel I was greeted with a "What cheer O!" followed by a hearty grasp of a grimy fist and the everlasting mugs of tea. Then I was almost dragged down to the cabin and made to sample a variety of teetotal drinks referred to as "beverages"; they were of various shades and colours but all appeared to taste the same, if "taste" is a fair description of it. Immediately after this came dinner—and such a dinner: I watched with wondering eyes the disappearance of the plates of fish, followed by the usual beef and potatoes, and finished off with mighty dumplings. Then more "beverages" and after that more tea.

I spent the night under the Admiral's hospitable "deck"; there were no hawsepipes conveying life-giving air, no friendly onions, and I rather fancy that my Cape Horn experience was preferable to what followed.

The condition of the atmosphere may be imagined when I state that on the left of the fore-end of the cabin was the ever-open entrance to the donkey-engine and boiler department, which was in full blast night and day; opposite this in a recess stood a huge old-fashioned cooking-range, also at the time in full blast, for

on this evening a large batch of bread had just been baked.

The sole means of ventilation, apart from the small companion which led down to the cabin, was a still smaller skylight, an opening about two and a half feet wide by three feet long. The whole crew slept here, but on this occasion, in addition to a friend from the mission boat and myself, there were two more visitors, skippers, from other vessels, making, with the crew, some nine or ten souls in all.

The Admiral, who kept watch on deck, kindly offered me his berth, but I preferred the wooden locker as being nearer the skylight. There were two of us on each side of the table on the lockers, and the berths above us were occupied, with the exception of the Admiral's. A heavy pair of sea-boots could be seen projecting here and there, the wearers of which were evidently sound asleep. We on the locker had apparently robbed the two apprentices of their "resting" places, and they were stowed away in the engine-room. Underneath the table were two curs, the property of the Admiral. His last words to me before going on deck was an earnest injunction to be careful and not spill myself off the locker, as one of his dogs was "werry fond of bones!"

After many attempts to adapt my form to the locker, and to evade the persistent attention of numberless flies, I lost consciousness; it was more of a swoon than sleep, on coming out of which I noticed that one of the boys had sneaked out of the engine-room and was crawling up the ladder with a dog under each arm; presently he returned, and I watched the luxury-loving young miscreant take the place of the dogs under the table, where in a minute he was sound asleep, judging by the vocal evidence he afforded.

On the lockers opposite to me were the other two visitors also snoring vigorously; they had made themselves "comfortable" by placing their sea-boots and oileys under their heads.

All the while the ship was pitching about in the most abominable manner, and as it became impossible to remain on my perch I went on deck, and looked in vain for a resting-place. Fortunately, daylight came very soon—and my attention was called to my friend, the Admiral, who was in a state of wrath, and wanting to know "who it was 'ad put them poor dogs up on deck during the night."

One beautiful day when the carriers were boarding fish with their usual rapidity a squall came without the slightest warning. In a moment

the trawlers were scudding in every direction; we passed a boat bottom upwards, and saw another turning turtle; the rope by which she was towing snapped like a thread and over she went. The spray was flying about in every direction. It was wonderful to see the smart way the short, dumpy boats and the smacks were handled, and the usually stolid, sleepy-looking fishermen rise to the occasion and effect the rescue of their mates from the spilled boats. On board the trawlers they were taking in sail, reefing, etc., at lightning speed, and in a short time all the boats were snugged down; when everything was ready to face the gale the wind dropped just as suddenly as it came up.

During the course of the day the trawl brought up a great stone festooned liberally with seaweed. The Admiral gazed on it with a great appearance of admiration, and turning to me said, "Take this 'ome with yer, Mr. 'Emmy; it'll make a fine hornament for yer garding." I was obliged to refuse his kind offer, for, apart from other reasons, the mass must have weighed a couple of hundredweight. Then, not at all discouraged, he picked up a peculiar reddish bunch of seaweed, and, holding it under my nose, remarked: "There's a fine scent for you, Mr. 'Emmy, that kind of stuff

smells like bergamot it does. The perfoomer's ought to make use of it." The stench of it to me was something awful, but I smiled a sickly smile and remarked: "Yes, indeed, they would make a fortune out of it if they knew."

Later on came the following: "Yer sees us now, Mr. 'Emmy, in our dirt an' rags, but if yer seed us ashore, in our fine Sunday clothes and our gowlden chains, you'd take us for dooks or erls!"

Well, I took him, at any rate, for a very hospitable and jolly companion, and, with a final request on his part to come again, I left by a very simple method that entailed no exertion on my part; he let go his foresail and got ahead of the *Edward Birkbeck*, then getting into my boat, which was towing astern, all I had to do was to let go the painter, and drop down alongside of my own abode.

III

Tragedies of the Dogger Bank

It is not usual, in these storm-vexed regions, to experience calms, and, rarest of all, for them to last long; a day, or couple, at the outside, yet I was informed that the mission ship, the *Temple Tate*, once lay in the centre of eighteen vessels, all lashed together, for three days, with

not a breath of wind and the sea like oil. It was very difficult to conceive, for though it was during July and August when I was on the Bank, there was nothing occurred that with decency could call itself a calm, and blow high, blow low, the sea was ever restless.

One night our skipper related the following yarn, which gives some idea of what the "Bank" can do in the way of weather during the winter months.

In the gale of which he spoke, five-and-twenty smacks foundered with never a single man saved. The scene of the tragedy was on the edge of the north-west corner of the Bank, where the water is very shallow, and when a gale from the Atlantic comes rushing round the North of Scotland this part of the Dogger becomes like the bar of a great river, a boiling cauldron, in fact. It was in the year 1862, and the narrator of the story was a member of the crew of one of the old-fashioned smacks which possessed a sliding window in the stern, and sliding panels attached to the bunks. In the fury of the gale he was washed overboard, and, marvellously enough, was thrown back against the vessel by the recoil of the wave that had taken him off, when he was clutched by some of the crew and hauled into safety. Managing to get below he turned in to his bunk, and pulled the

sliding panel close, an act which nearly cost him his life a second time, for a terrible sea smashed though the panel that protected the stern window and filled the cabin. In the terror of the moment the man lost his presence of mind and vainly fumbled in the pitch darkness for the panel of his bunk, the direction of which he had forgotten. Fortunately the shout of the skipper brought him to his senses, and he got his head above the water just in time to avoid death by drowning again. They had an awful time of it baling out the cabin, and at length reached the coal locker, where the mate was horrified by touching something that felt like a human body. Examination revealed the corpse of one of the apprentices. The poor lad had been in his bunk when the sea rushed in and lifted up the bottom boards, carrying the boy below into the coal locker.

A skipper who was with us on "a busman's holiday," related his experiences of the great gale of December, 1863.

"I was," he said, "mate of the *Swift*, and it was shortly before Christmas that it came on a heavy gale. We reefed our vessel as snugly as possible and lay to. On that same night we shipped a sea which broke the main boom and gaff, carrying away the foresail and mainsail,

at the same time heaving the ship on her beam ends. We immediately rushed on deck as soon as the water would let us, as we didn't know whether the ship was sinking or not. In fact, it was a minute or two before we could see the rails; at last to our joy the water appeared to be leaving her, and we then got the anchor ready so as to bring her head to the wind.

"Then we turned our attention to pumping and baling. I looked down the cabin and discovered that it was half-full of water; the funnel had been carried away and the water had passed down through the opening. The rugs, beds, and things generally were floating about. We nailed some canvas over the opening, and it took us six hours' hard, continuous work to get the water out of the cabin.

"On examination we discovered that the bottom of our small boat was stove in, and things looked very black for us, but we started in to splice the main boom and gaff. But bad as our position was, there were others who were worse off. We drifted across the *Thomas and Edith* and found that her crew, with the exception of three apprentices, had been washed overboard. We told them to show a light and we would endeavour by all means in our power to lay to them, but in our dreadful position had

little hope of doing so. We managed, however, to secure her with a line, but she broke away, and later was picked up by a pilot and taken into a German port. As an instance of the truth of the old saying: 'Know nothing, fear nothing,' we heard afterwards that the eldest of the apprentices of this smack, on taking charge, immediately gave an order for a supply of pancakes to be got ready!

"The day after we parted from the *Thomas and Edith* our boom was again carried away at the splice, and we were then obliged to let go the anchor. We lay to for twelve hours whilst refitting our spars, and, this accomplished, we got under way shortly afterwards, sighting another craft with her mainmast gone and not a soul on board, and yet another deserted vessel.

"Next day we spoke one with a strange crew on board; their vessel had been swept from stern to stern by the sea, which carried away everything, even their companion.

"We came across much wreckage on our way back, and had the utmost difficulty in avoiding contact with floating spars and timber."

IV

The following brief description of a dog's life in the North Sea is mostly the outcome of

making the personal acquaintance of the dogs themselves, those which I met at intervals on the forecastle of the fish-carrier, when "boarding" fish was in full swing. There it was that the dogs of the fleet forgathered to meet old friends, and, doubtless, in their own way to extol the various virtues of their owners.

Most of the trawlers possess a dog—mongrels mostly—who seem happy enough on the whole, but they rightly insist on having their day out. This occurs on the arrival of the steam cutter to load the fish, when the dogs one and all, as soon as the trawlers' boats are launched, jump into them, and if they are not allowed on board, settle things for themselves by jumping into the sea, and swimming after the boats, thus compelling their masters either to take them on board, or to see them drown. On reaching the cutter they would immediately spring on board and make their way to the fo'c'sle to join the canine out-of-door conversazione there held. There were dogs of every size and breed, all kinds of dogs, save sad dogs, and the tail-wagging and nose-rubbing that went on was an amusing and instructive sight. One could imagine the: "Hullo, old sport, and how have you been getting on since I saw you last?" "Fine, Dan, old chap," and soon genuine

hilarity and happiness attended these meetings. Laughter? Don't tell me that dogs can't laugh! I'm certain they can, even if they don't make a noise about it.

It is a sight that any dog-lover would understand and appreciate.

They told me that some of these dogs are very useful in foggy weather, as they can hear the creaking of spars or the sound of a propeller long before the men can, and their barking makes the crew wise as to the position of the unseen vessel.

I suggested that perhaps they might be trained to give, say, one bark when the distant sound heard by them indicated a sailing vessel, and two when they heard the threshing of a propeller. But the suggestion was not taken up.

An ancient sinner on one of the trawlers perpetrated the following yarn relative to a trawler's dog. "Our skipper had brought on board with him this voyage a terrier, a smart-looking chap. 'He'll clear the ship in no time,' said the skipper. One day I catched a rat in a trap—our ship is full on 'em—and not wanting to drownd it—for I am a lover of hanimals—I whistles to the dog an' shouts, 'Rats'; the dog was down below aside me in one second, and

stands in front o' the cage wich I 'olds in me 'ands, and there he is a waggin' of 'is tail—five 'undred beats a minit—an' 'e 'ad 'is jaws wide hopin. Hup goes the shutter of the cage, an' I'm blessed if the rat didn't jump straight into the dog's hextended jaws, and was down 'is throat like a streak of lightning. So quickly did it 'appen that the dog 'adn't caught on, an' was running about in search of the missing rat—a good meal of fresh meat fairly wasted, that's what it was."

There was then in vogue a custom which had been observed from time immemorial, by which a smack returning to the Banks from a visit to the home-port gave a feast to the friends of the crew, the chief item on the menu being leg of mutton. It was stated that this joint was always towed astern "to keep it fresh," but this I was not prepared to accept as an actual fact; it *might* have been fastened to the counter where it would occasionally dip with the movement of the boat.

Anyhow, on sighting the fleet, the returning smack would run up a flag, a signal of invitation to its friends for the banquet. After weeks of feeding on corned or salt beef, fish, and gallons of tea such a signal was frantically welcomed by those who could claim the slightest ground

CAUGHT NAPPING.
An episode in the Pacific.

of friendship with anyone on the hospitable boat, and very soon the visitors would begin to arrive. The feast was served on deck, with fish-boxes and flats for both chairs and tables. News would be exchanged after the first greetings, with the latest stories—and scandal from the port, letters and parcels handed round, before the serious business of the day was arrived at—the carving of the mutton. If the circle of friends were a large one there would be two legs of mutton disposed, with fresh vegetables and the usual "trimmings." Then would come a supply of puddings and pies, prepared by the women-folk ashore, and at times, as a great treat, bottles of beer as accompaniment, in addition to "beverages" of wondrous hue, and, of course, the inevitable tea in plenty. Spirits were strictly *taboo* by owners and skippers alike.

After the meal would come songs, speeches and perhaps some horseplay as "the end of the perfect day," when the guests would depart for their various floating homes. Such an occasion, with its simple pleasures, made a welcome break in the round of ceaseless toil that was the lot of the fishers of the Dogger.

Our own diet on the mission boat was varied by an occasional joint brought from the Mission

headquarters by the returning fish cutters, but, curious to relate, although the holds were packed with ice no particular care was taken to keep the meat fresh. The result was that it generally arrived in such a tainted condition that neither the missioners nor myself could tackle it, although the crew of the *Edward Birkbeck could* and *did*. Can it be that they were the deepest of deep sea fishermen?

V

The Dogger Bank as a Sketching Ground

For the sea-painter this sketch of the North Sea is a veritable "Tom Tiddlers' Ground," within the range of twenty-four hours he may get every possible kind of light, climate and atmospheric effect, and infinite variety in the colour of the water.

The Dogger Bank is some 170 miles north and south, and some sixty-five east and west; with a varying depth of from ten to twenty fathoms. The bottom is sometimes mud, sometimes sand or scruff; grapes, as this is called by the fishermen. To the north, the water is more often a deep and magnificent sapphire, and away towards Heligoland a pale turquoise;

the skies are glorious—fantastically terrible or surpassingly lovely; never have I seen such wonderful cloud effects. In the evening they may lower, and overhead a blackish-purple, big with one of the frequent thunderstorms, while the play of the lightning along their edges looks like a fringe of bullion.

At night the sea may be heavy and sullen, suggestive of the dread powers of nature on the eve of a mighty storm, yet the next morning there may possibly be a brilliant sun lighting up a sparkling, dancing blue sea.

Then again, there will be met every conceivable form of wave. The variations of the sea on the Banks are endless. Much depends on the depth of the currents—whether the bottom is sand-rock or seaweed, but where the edges of the Bank receives the shock of the Atlantic rollers rushing through the Pentland Firth or farther north the sea is ever in turmoil, particularly when driven by a fierce wind.

The trawlers are subject to a continual battering; one assault is no sooner over than another is on them before they have time to get into a favourable position to meet it. In shallow water, under certain conditions, the sea becomes a mass of broken foam, similar to that seen on the bar of a river when the ebb tide, swollen

by inland floods, meets the storm-driven sea at the narrow entrance of the harbour.

There is always a constant procession of passing ships to be seen; Dutch galliots, wind-jammers of different nationalities, the slow moving timber tubs from Norway and Sweden, as well as every type of steamer.

The fishing fleets themselves present an ever-changing variety of subject; when two of them meet the sea is literally covered with smacks and trawlers which, in the varied conditions of light, take on a constantly changing aspect, while at night the sight is still more impressive, with the myriad lights twinkling and shifting, giving a suggestion of some mysterious city planted in mid-ocean.

The painting of figure pictures is no easy matter, as may well be imagined. Calms are not usual, and the trawlers never seem at ease. In my particular case I depend on the weather to get sitters or models, or on the services that were held on board the mission boat, which would bring my volunteer models. There was no picking or choosing, I just had to take them as I could get 'em—a pair of boots from one, arms or head from another and so on. Then, perhaps, just as I had got a "victim" into my clutches and settled down to work, the Evil One

would suggest to the skipper that then was the time to "bout ship," which, of course, upset everything—light, effect, sea and all—or someone would pop his head up above the hatchway to say that the service was about to commence! and as heads counted in their reports my sitters would adjourn. Owing to the constant movement of the trawlers—and this would apply in steam-driven vessels as well as "sailers"—one could never depend on one's brush descending on the right spot; the carefully mixed blue intended for the eye, might descend on the nose, or that for the latter knock out the eye. Job might have had some fairly good cause for airing his woes, if he had attempted, as I did, to paint an elaborate figure picture on a sort of switchback or constantly moving cinder-sifter.

Apart from painting figures the work was comparatively easy; the constant movement gave freedom of touch, and one could depend on the stroke of the brush suggesting that, at any rate. When it was really rough my procedure was simply to lash the easel to the foot of the mizen-mast, then pass a bowline round my waist—attached to the mizen rigging. All was then secure, and neither painter nor picture would fetch away to leeward.

A trifling drawback might occur occasionally if a sea came aboard aft, drenching me from behind and filling the paint-box, in which case the only resource I had was to take my work down to the cabin and carry on there, popping out now and then to refresh my memory. This I had to do on several occasions, although it was summer time too! But I think it would be much more convenient on board the steam trawlers of to-day; they are larger and ride higher from the water, apart from having a bridge, and when the combined smell of stale fish, engine-room and fish-livers—which are preserved for an indefinite period in open casks to be converted later into Cod Liver Oil—have become sufficiently familiar to be treated with contempt, then indeed comparative comfort should be experienced.

The visitor to the Banks would return home with the feeling that he had seen some stirring episodes, and had met real live men, chock-full to the brim with vitality, and leading a life as close to Nature as is possible.

CHAPTER VII

ROUGHING IT IN THE WESTERN ISLANDS

In the mid-nineties I happened to be living in Liverpool, and amongst my friends there were the members of a large firm of fish merchants, who ran fast steam vessels to the various fishing grounds to collect fish and bring it to that city. It was suggested to me by one of these friends that I would find plenty of subjects for my brush in the Hebrides, where fleets of herring boats from Wick and Thurso were then fishing the neighbourhood of these islands. Their steam-boats were then running to the island of Vattersea, and if I would like a passage out I was welcome to it. I asked no questions as to the accommodation, but jumped at the proposal, and the very next day I went on board a large Liverpool tug, which was bound for a cargo of fish—nothing faster in the way of steam could

be found of a suitable tonnage, so a number of these tugs were thus employed.

The passage is remembered by me solely from the fact that, for the first time in my life, I was sea-sick. A choppy sea, passing between two islands, and the combined smell of stale fish and engine-room brought about my discomfiture, and the very next time I fell in with a sufferer from *mal de mer*, instead of the superior feeling that had once possessed me at the melancholy spectacle, then and thenceforth I felt sympathy—for the steward or stewardess.

In due course we arrived at our destination, a barren island of a peculiar shape, in the waters around which lay the fishing fleets. It was a dreary, rocky place, with only one permanent house on it, inhabited by a farm bailiff, or, I should rather say, a cattle herd, as there was nothing but cattle on the island, and so far as I could see their diet consisted mostly of rocks and furze-bushes. The fishing season must have been a god-send to the man, when, for a couple of months or so, the island was a perfect hive of life and industry. Small schooners from abroad—steamers from Liverpool, brought fish-packers, merchants, coopers, buyers, clerks, skippers, beside the crews of a couple of hundred fishing vessels to add to the bustle. There was

a regular village of wooden shanties bordering the upper end of the harbour, brought by the fishermen to live in when their boats were wind or weather-bound—a frequent occurrence, as the fishing in the place commenced very early in the year.

The fishermen also brought with them, for what purpose I could not guess, a lot of beastly mongrels of all shapes and sizes, and large and small they alike resented my presence on the island, pretending, doubtless, to believe that I had designs on the oatmeal bags, their "grey hens" containing alcohol and other treasures in the huts. Their masters, too, I found more than unwilling to enter into cheerful conversation with me. I would commence in the usual manner by remarking: "It's a fine day"—or the reverse (and nine days out of ten it was the latter), but the only reply I would get was "Ou aye!" uttered in menacing tones, as if to shut off any advances I might be preparing to make with fell designs on their whisky bottles. Yet doubtless had I been allowed to get under the rough husk I should have found them possessed of sterling qualities. They could "no understand hoo an able-bodied mon," as I appeared to be, should "daffer on with a few wee peints, sma' brushes, and bits o' paper," instead of getting to work.

On landing at one of the jetties I was greeted by my friend, Mr. William Kelsall, the partner in charge there; a fine, burly, handsome giant, whose memory will linger in Liverpool for many years. I have seldom met his equal.

"Now, Tom," he said, "you'll have to rough it," and with that he led me up to the largest of some wooden erections a short distance away. This building was divided into four compartments, two for the men and the other two for some fifty or sixty buxom damsels from Wick and Thurso, whose work it was to prepare the fish for the packers to salt or place in ice.

The compartment, which I was to share with the fish-buyers and their clerks for the next six weeks or so, was simply furnished; a double row of bunks to sleep in, a long deal table with some forms or benches, and a few pegs to hang our oilys, etc., on, were all I saw. But it was snug enough; a large stove kept the place warm, the berths were roomy, and the mattresses and coverings were such as people who were well accustomed to roughing it might be expected to provide themselves with, i.e. the very best. The compartment that ran parallel with ours was occupied by the coopers, fish-packers, and the working staff generally; the two compartments of the other half were occu-

pied respectively by the maidens from Wick and Thurso. I heard that they were thus separated because they quarrelled fiercely over the merits of their respective towns, their sweethearts, and doubtless those charms that they themselves possessed—which took the form chiefly of undoubted good nature and cheerfulness, but I am willing to suppose there were other merits, many and varied, which I might have discovered on a closer acquaintance.

There was, however, one distinct difference between them, inasmuch that although both, with the assistance of their male friends of the working staff department, sailors from the ships, firemen from the steamers, and a fiddle and two accordions possessed by these men, managed to keep us from getting any sleep before midnight or after—yet the one section indulged only in sacred music—hymns of every description—and the other obliged, or disobliged, with nothing but ballads, and music-hall ditties. There the difference ended and it was hard to tell which danced and sang the most vigorously. In vain would we hammer on the partition that separated us from one section—I forget whether they were the belles of Wick or Thurso—and our repeated petitions to be allowed to go to sleep were received with jeers and laughter.

I am bound to confess that amongst the younger men in our compartment were some who would have liked to have joined in the merry-makings—but there were Mr. Kelsall and one or two other heads of the firm to be considered; though discipline was lax at night, it had to be preserved during the working hours—and we had our dignity to consider, even as had the Highland Laird in the old, old story, so old, indeed, that I think none of the present generation can have heard it, so I'll venture it:

A Highland laird with his manservant once set out on a journey to "foreign" parts, south of Perth, and one night it chanced that they arrived at an inn wherein the only accommodation available was one room which contained one bed only, this being of the old-fashioned sort—a four-poster with a wooden canopy atop.

Here was a predicament. It was "no feet" that the laird should occupy the same bed with his servant—and there was nowhere else except under the bed or on top of the canopy; the former was impossible, for the space was filled with heavy trunks, and it was "no proper," in any case, that the laird should sleep underneath his man. The question was settled by his climbing up, clothes and all, to the canopy, where he

settled himself down as well as he could, whilst Jock leisurely undressed, turned into a feather bed with ample blankets, and made himself snug.

In the middle of the night the laird put his head over and shouted:

"Jock, mon Jock?"

"Yes, laird," was the sleepy answer.

"Hoo are ye, Jock?" asked the laird.

"Braw an' snug," answered Jock. "Hoo are ye, laird?"

"Ah am sore an' stiff, Jock, an' if it were no for my deegnity I'd be comin' an' joining ye."

While talking about beds, I'll hand out the following which is some centuries younger—also briefer. It was told me by a Scotsman.

"Will ye give me tuppence for a bed?" asked the tramp at the door of a cottage.

"Bring it in," replied the gude woman who had responded to his appeal.

But to return to our island. I should state that except on business bent the fishermen never appeared at our end. It may be that the more dashing ways of the sailors and the coopers from Liverpool excited their jealousy, and the stories that filtered across to them at times of

the dancing, junketings, profane singing and general frivolity shocked them.

There was never a drop of drink, save water, at our part of the island; what there was at the other I knew not, but this indirectly led to tragedy, for the craving for stronger drink formed the excuse for an excursion to Castle Bay, on a neighbouring island, where was an inn. This excursion was arranged primarily by the skippers of the steamers and sailing vessels and some half-dozen or so of their boats took part in it. I had heard of the beauties of this place—I mean the picturesque side of it—and so, with some of the younger men of our compartment, I joined the party.

It is possible that during the last half century there may have been some alteration to the place, but at the time of which I write, with the exception of the inn, there were only two modern dwellings, built of stone in the usual style—one of which was the store. The village itself consisted of the most primitive Highland shielings I'd ever seen or dreamt of. It was very pleasant wandering about amongst the natives, but they were not loquacious. Not even my informing them that one of my grandfathers was a Macdonald, and was born on one of the islands, appeared to interest them.

I may mention that it is an historical fact that the Macdonalds of the Western Highlands and the McDonalds of the North of Ireland are akin, and that in far off days when either was engaged in a tribal war with their neighbours the other would come to their assistance, making their journey in the curraghs of the period.

When we assembled for the return journey we formed a very different party. Most of the men were under the influence of "Hieland whusky" of the very newest brand; some were laughing, others quarrelsome. The skippers were vaunting the sailing powers of their boats and making small bets on the matter, which culminated in a decision to race back to Vattersea, the first boat to arrive to get for a prize a pooled sum made up from what they had not left at the public house. This necessitated various journeys to and fro from the inn to get change or to drag out some lingering toper. It proved to be a race of the "caucus" kind, for each boat sailed as soon as it had its little lot on board. We were the last to leave, and I think we possessed the most drunken crowd of all. The skipper of one of the Liverpool boats, who was at the tiller, was so far fuddled that on reaching the entrance to

the harbour he deliberately turned the boat's head round with the probable intention of returning to get more drink; he didn't express the intention for he was speechlessly intoxicated. So someone else took over the steering, and we eventually got outside, to find that there was a nasty sea on, and that it was blowing hard, with the wind dead ahead! There was I and a friend—one of the younger buyers—sober as judges, in a boat full of drunken men, with night coming on apace and the wind growing stronger every minute. We were shipping the green water every now and then and were deluged with spray all the time, and in the middle of this two of our drunkards must start fighting. Fortunately they were separated in time to prevent our boat being overturned, and thus bringing us to an untimely end. For four weary hours we were beating up against the wind, and it was pitch dark when we made our island. How we found the entrance I do not know, but when we arrived eventually there was a crowd of men and women standing about on the shore, with Mr. Kelsall in a great way. News had just reached them of the loss of one of the boats, and it might have been ours, for all but two had by then returned. The news, alas, was true enough, and what was left

DOLPHIN STRIKING IN THE DOLDRUMS.

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of the boat was washed ashore, but no trace of the men was found.

This put a damper on things generally, deepened by the fact that the weather did not improve, and that the herring apparently had suddenly remembered an appointment elsewhere. One morning, on turning out, I found that the fishing fleets had disappeared, taking with them their village, packed up and stowed in their holds, so we too packed up and followed their example, leaving the cattle-tender monarch of all he surveyed. If he were a man who liked a quiet life he certainly got what he liked, for no wife or children had he to keep him company.

The next journey from Liverpool took me to the Isle of Man, where the herring fishing was in full swing, and such places as Peel Harbour were most picturesque. What the island has become in these latter days I do not know, and hardly care to think of the fate that has probably befallen it from the artistic point of view. It would possibly now remind me of a visit I made, or rather chanced upon by accident, in the neighbourhood of New York. The journey I made by tram line, transferring from one car to the other, altogether some thirty miles or so from that city before arriving at that super-

Blackpool—Coney Island. I was in search of a quiet roosting place somewhere within reasonable distance of Brooklyn, where I then had a temporary studio, while engaged in painting some large subject pictures connected with the American War. I actually went to the end of the tram lines without seeing anything that would do; was, indeed, not tempted once to get off on the chance of meeting something, and then I landed in the middle of this pandemonium. It was "the season," and Coney Island was in full blast. We have nothing like it here. Could Blackpool show an average of three corpses a day during the season? I gazed around in dismay, for I had travelled for hours, or so it seemed to me! Then I espied in the distance a pier, and alongside of that pier was a steamboat. Looking neither to the right nor to the left, I made a bee-line for the pier and on arriving saw on the steamer in large letters, "TO NEW YORK." Muttering a prayer of thankfulness I stepped down the gangway and was saved.

At the Isle of Man there was no roughing it, and if I mentioned the prices that I paid at hotels, etc., it would make the poor downtrodden middle-class man, who goes holiday-making with wife and children, envious that

he was not born half a century or so earlier!

In the following year I went in one of the same vessels from Liverpool to Kinsale, where the mackerel fishing was in progress. Perhaps next to the pretty colleens and the beautiful harbour, my recollections are chiefly connected with my visits to the Liverpool steamers whence I mostly made my sketches. These were in the early morning, and until midday we were surrounded by the Kinsale hookers and other boats deeply laden with mackerel. Lunch-time was great. If you wish to taste mackerel at its best it must come straight out of the sea—or out of the boat wherein it has lain but a short hour or two—and go into the frying-pan to be cooked by a man who has probably cooked millions in his time. Thus eaten, with a small loaf of new bread and a pewter pot of *new* porter, it provides a banquet fit for a king, especially so if you've been at work in the open for some hours previously.

What trouble I had to find a roosting place in Kinsale! One house only attracted my attention; the window curtains were not only clean, but neither patched nor ragged, and in particular I was attracted by a canary cage with a nice canary perched therein. So I knocked

at the door and was shown in. Alas! it was but an empty show: there was no carpet and everything was dirty and squalid; the furniture was rickety and, worst of all, the canary was a stuffed one!

I paid another visit to Ireland in later years, when at the suggestion of a friend of mine, Mr. Victor Collins, a journalist, I made a journey to Innishmann, one of the Arran Islands. These are situated on the fringe of Galway Bay, some thirty miles from the town of that name. Mr. Collins was in the habit of going there annually, and was greatly interested in the inhabitants, who were unique in many ways. His idea was that they might be taught that there were other vegetables in the world than potatoes, that roads were not bad things in their way, and many other matters that are merely commonplace elsewhere; but the pig is an easy thing to drive compared to an Irishman, and none of these improvements did they want.

The people on these islands are supposed to be the ancient inhabitants of Ireland who came originally from the East; they were driven out of Ireland by the Milesians, and they took refuge in the outlying islands on the west coast; this I could well believe as in their fondness for colour; in their features, manners and customs,

they strongly resembled the Oriental. For instance, whilst waiting for the boat to come to carry off their cattle, the men, holding the rope round their horses' necks, will maintain a position sitting on their heels for an hour at a time without moving. Their hatred of strangers is intense, and, generally speaking, they are wild and strange to a degree. To me the place seemed uncanny; from the time I went there until I left I had a feeling that everything about me was unreal. I would be sitting near the landing place painting and with nothing in sight but an ancient prehistoric fort on a distant hill; then would appear to the right or left, from nowhere it seemed to me, a couple of lean sheep tethered together (they are always tethered together to prevent them leaping the loose stone walls—but in vain), or it might be goats or lean and hungry mongrel curs, or a horse with a pack saddle on its back, with a couple of empty casks or nets attached to the horns at each side of the saddle. Then it might be a part of two bodies and the whole of four legs—the upper part of the men being inside the curragh, the canvas boat which they were carrying.

Here was a place where they were all peasant, all dressed alike; wealth was counted in cattle

and pigs. They were all Irishmen, and whenever they left the island in their boats to board the steamboat on the way to Queenstown to take passage to the United States, they took nothing with them, the very clothing they stood in had to be left behind when they got fitted out for their entry into the outside world. The most pretentious dwellings in the place were those of the postmaster, where I stayed, and the house where my friend sojourned; these had not only wooden floors to the bedrooms which we occupied, but wooden ceilings also.

When I arrived at Galway I thought I had stepped back into the beginning of the eighteenth century, but when I arrived off the islands in the steamer I had the same feeling that I experienced when I came across an island in the Pacific, for round the steamer were crowds of strangely-dressed people, yelling and shouting, and pushing for position alongside. The ship was crowded with the inhabitants of the isles, for a big fair had just ended at Galway. Shoals of little pigs—"boneens" as they are called—are brought over to the islands to fatten, and there were also sacks of flour and all sorts of things, including colleens, a priest or two, to load from the steamer into the narrow canvas boats (they have wooden ribs), until they were

laden down to the water's edge. There were also cattle on board, but these were merely shoved overboard and left to swim ashore.

On board the steamer was a little ordinary-looking man, dressed very shabbily in the mainland style. I noticed that every now and then one of the islanders would approach him and speak to him in Gaelic, to whom he would respond, put his hand in his pocket and pull out banknotes or gold and hand them over.

I asked the captain about this, and I was informed that the stranger was a cattle-dealer who sold the islanders' cattle on commission; he could neither read nor write, but his memory was such that months after one of these transactions he could remember not only the face of the man whose cattle he had sold, but the exact amount due to him. As an instance of the simplicity and trustfulness of the islanders, the following story is of interest:

The father of the publican was dying and the priest had given the last sacraments and informed him what he'd have to expect after he had done his turn of purgatory and found himself in heaven.

"Will St. Pathrick be there?" he eagerly asked.

"Oh yes, indeed," replied the priest, after a pause.

"An' how will I be after knowing him?" was the next question.

'Twas a puzzle, and I wish I could give the reply—if there was one.

But there is a certain amount of cuteness amongst these children of the sea; whenever there is a distress warrant for rent, they know in advance when it is due, and any healthy cattle disappear from the farm, and are replaced by sickly, weedy substitutes. One day a policeman arrived from the largest island, Aranmore, where they have, or did have, a police station, a county court, priests, doctors, and other depressing evidence of civilisation. The policeman wanted a man of the name of O'Connor or O'Brien, or some other common name, and no one seemed even to have heard of such a person. I saw and heard a girl of about eleven or twelve, who was leaning up against the wanted man's cottage, when she was accosted by the policeman with his question, and answered, "Shure is it me that ud not be after knowin' of such a man as that, when me own mother doesn't know of him: and ye a' just axed her."

When the Earl of Aberdeen, then Viceroy of Ireland, was in their direction in the vice-regal

yacht, his boat put off with him and the countess in order to see the island, but they never landed, for the natives stood on the beach and received them with a shower of stones. They thought they were a party of blue-jackets landing strange bailiffs to serve a writ on the island for the only tax they paid—or rather, hadn't paid. The wise men of Galway had put up a large tank to ensure the islanders a supply of water, and for it levied a tax of a couple of hundred or so a year. I did not blame the islanders for resisting it, for the first payment would have covered the cost twice over.

There is some good bream fishing from the rocks, and the islanders use stout wooden fishing rods somewhere about twenty feet in length. There is, of course, no "playing" the heavy fish with this, and as soon as a bite comes they just yank the fish ashore. They may be fishing from rocks that are twenty feet above the sea, standing bent with these rods in their hands half-an-hour at a time without moving. Never did I see such fine muscular men, and they live on "praties," white bread, tea, milk and butter, a little salt fish, and perhaps occasionally, on Sunday, a tiny piece of rusty bacon. The potatoes are boiled in such a manner that the inside is hard, half raw in fact; they call it

"leaving the blood in the potato." At the post office where I stayed I would see the folks at dinner; they would sit on three-legged stools surrounding a big tub of boiled potatoes, which they peeled down as we do a banana, holding the bottom part in their hands and now and then pulling off a piece of a salt fish which lay on top of the tub. When they had finished, the tub and the rest of its contents, if any, were taken outside and given to the pigs; or in some of the houses, where the pigs were brought up from the time they arrived as little "boneens," they just put the tub on the floor and the pigs would help themselves. Very well behaved, too, they were I understood—more of gentlemen perhaps than some of their masters, for did not they pay the rent?

The Congested District Board was undoubtedly composed of some of the most foolish people that I've heard of. They were prepared to make a grant of three pounds ten towards building pigsties, the cost of which to the people who built them might be a few shillings. With a piece of corrugated iron for the roofs—one half of them would not even bother about that—they had but to go a yard or two for the necessary material, for the island was all rock, and much of it of a handy size for such a job.

I spent five months among these people, so had full opportunity to learn something of them. They seemed to me to possess a perfect hatred of England and everything English, although they were quite willing to admit that their worst enemies were themselves. The very smallest children often used either to throw an occasional stone after me when passing, or run and hide themselves, or, perchance, the most venturesome one would stand up, encouraged by the others, and curse me vigorously in Gaelic. At least to me so it sounded.

Yet in many ways they were superior in the matter of behaviour to the peasantry of England. Certainly they have more dignity and better manners, while immorality is practically unknown. They govern themselves in their own way, without definite laws, but I was informed that their way is very effective.

One of them, an elderly man, had a great reputation for his craftiness, and if there was any business to be done with the mainland he was always chosen to transact it, but none of the islanders themselves would trust him with their own personal affairs!

The people believe implicitly in fairies, who are supposed chiefly to haunt the prehistoric forts of the island, of which there are two.

There was a man staying there who called himself a Belgian law student on his holiday—but was, I think, a German Naval officer studying the "sounds" by which Galway Bay is entered, an ideal spot for landing an expedition to stir up Ireland (this was in 1912). This man volunteered to sleep inside one of the forts, and did so for a couple of nights, but never a fairy did he see, a fact which drew the explanation, "Of course not! Wud ye think the fairies wud be after coming out when they knowed ye'd gone to spy on them?"

It was all very ideal, and the simple existence of the people was a fairly happy one. They did not miss the blessing and curses of civilisation, for they knew nothing more of them than they encountered on their visits to Galway, where they were nearly as scarce. And when the few people who came to the island for the day in summertime had gone, were there not the glorious faction fights to look forward to, when all the people, men, women and children, would have all the excitement they wanted?

In their canvas boats they fish at night, summer and winter, off the islands in the stormy, ever-heaving Atlantic. It was interesting to watch their departure: they put up a "bit

of prayer" before starting, and every boat carried a little bottle of holy water. In the "sounds"—as the channels between the islands are called—the sea, driven by the heavy Atlantic gales from the west, rushes through so furiously that in the middle of the sound the water is piled up higher than at the sides, yet in the most fearful weather the boats have crossed in search of doctor or a priest in time of need.

The great Atlantic waves strike the cliff with such force that they drive up a hundred feet or so, carrying great chunks of rock that are piled at the top. In heavy weather when the sea rushes up the cliff, the spray is caught by the wind and carried far inland, when the islands have thus the appearance of being on fire, with smoke pouring all over the place. The Atlantic side of Innishmann is in part the most horrible-looking place possible to see; the grey volcanic rock is split in every direction, and, with the rain, wind and spray, is sharpened here and there like flint, and if one should stumble there the result is easily dangerous. I have returned from a journey to the weather side of the island covered with bruises, yet on the mainland side there are beautiful sands. The village, which is a mile or more from the landing-place, stretches

right across, facing Connemara, and from the walls of the forts there is the most fascinating view of the coast-line, with mountain, islands and plains.

CHAPTER VIII

NOTES ON SOME OF MY PICTURES

The Wreck of the "Aidar"

It was one evening when sitting in the lounge of an hotel at Port Said that I heard the yarn of the wreck of the *Aidar*, which was verified on my return to England, when the hero of it, Captain W. I. Nutman, was the recipient of well-deserved honour.

The s.s. *Aidar* was caught in a heavy gale in the Adriatic and was hove down on her beam ends through the cargo shifting. She was fast sinking, when in response to their flares and rockets the Bibby liner *Staffordshire* bore down upon her. On seeing their plight a lifeboat was despatched, but, owing to the rolling of the ship, had great difficulty in approaching. It was at length accomplished, and a batch of men taken off; on the second journey, however, the lifeboat was struck by the *Aidar* and partially

stove in, but, nevertheless, managed to return to the *Staffordshire* with its freight of shipwrecked seamen.

On the third journey with another boat, the remaining men were taken off, with the exception of the captain and a fireman, whom, owing to an injury—a broken leg—it had been impossible to get on the rescuing boat. As there was every prospect of the *Aidar* going down, the second officer of the Bibby boat called on Captain Nutman to come aboard without delay—a request joined in by his own men, who beseeched him to join them. But the captain's only reply was, "If I'm going to be saved, this man is to be saved too. Ask your captain to lay by until daybreak, and if we're afloat pick us up."

The *Aidar* was sighted at 2 a.m., but when daylight came at 7 a.m. and glasses were levelled from the bridge of the *Staffordshire*, no vessel was to be seen; the *Aidar* had foundered. One of the lifeboats was launched and rowed in the direction in which it might be expected to meet with wreckage from the sunken ship. A floating boat was at length seen, on the bottom of which was Captain Nutman holding the wounded fireman across the keel. It proved that when the ship went down the captain had clung to

the fireman, and by the sheerest good luck when they rose to the surface came across one of their own boats floating bottom up. It was a hard struggle to reach her, hampered as he was with his burthen, but a still harder one to reach the comparative safety of the keel. Time after time did the captain fail to reach it, but when almost at his last gasp he got his grip through an extra heavy wave coming to his assistance, and managed to haul his companion to his side.

This suggested a subject after my own heart, and soon after my return to London it engaged my attention. I got into communication with Captain Nutman (always make a point to get into touch with those who are the actual actors in these dramas of the sea), but, as usual, found it somewhat difficult to get anything from him that referred to his splendid achievement. The men of the Merchant Marine, like their brethren of the Naval Service, do not talk about their doings, they all come under the head of "duty," and are taken in a matter-of-fact manner. Nevertheless, this episode of the *Aidar's* captain rightly ranks among the heroic actions of the sea, and is characteristic of the spirit that pervades our "sailorman," a fact which was demonstrated in innumerable cases during the submarine campaign in the Great War.

The statement of Captain Harris, of the *Staffordshire*, provided me with most of the facts, and is as follows:

"On approaching the distressed vessel at 2.5 a.m., found it was the s.s. *Aidar*, 1,585 tons burthen, on her beam ends, and to all appearances sinking fast. Steamed to windward and, owing to excessive darkness and a high sea, had difficulty in approaching her. Took off twelve men, came again, seven men rescued, but had to return immediately as side of boat stove in by heavy rolling of sinking ship. Another boat at once sent off in charge of second mate. Reached the *Aidar* just as she was sinking, and rescued eight more. Captain Nutman, after *vainly attempting to persuade a passenger who refused to leave the sinking ship, threw him into the water as the only means of saving his life.* (*Said passenger threatened him with prosecution for assault when he got ashore.*)

"The captain himself refused to go as there was a fireman whom it was found impossible to get into the boat. He called to the second officer of the *Staffordshire*, directing him to pull his boat away from the wreckage, saying, 'If I'm saved this man is to be saved. If we are here in the morning come back for us.' The entire occurrence was witnessed by the captain

of my ship from 2 a.m. to the final rescue at 7 a.m."

The Wreck of the "Birkenhead"

When my painting of "The Wreck of the *Birkenhead*" was on exhibition at Bristol in 1893 it led to my getting into touch with one of the survivors of that disaster, and obtaining a story of it which I am able to give here for the first time.

Mr. Coffin was at the wheel when the ill-fated vessel struck the rocks off Danger Point in 1852, and witnessed the troops fall into line on the deck by order of the officer; everything being done as at a formal parade.

Mr. Coffin was coxswain of one of the cutters and the boat of which he was in charge, with its freight of women and children, was the first to leave the ship. He was afraid to keep too near on account of the swell that lashed around her, but managed to pick up several other survivors. He verified an incident which I had introduced into my picture on hearing the detailed stories of other survivors with whom I had been in personal touch while the picture was in progress. It related to a young officer, Ensign Russell, who gave up his place in a boat

to make room for a soldier rescued from drowning, probably the husband of one of the women in the boat. When the picture was first exhibited there was much discussion about this "melodramatic incident," but Mr. Coffin verified it fully, and said that when the ensign jumped out of the boat, he was immediately dragged down by sharks.

The account of the last moment of the soldiers up on the poop was gathered from some of the sailors who had taken refuge in the rigging of the mast which remained above water when the ship went down.

As the deck began to be submerged Colonel Seton, the commander of the troops, told the men they had better fall out and do the best they could for themselves. Most of them took to the water. Colonel Seton, Captain Salmond and a number of others, got into the little gig, but their weight snapped the frail craft in twain whilst it was still hanging from the davits, and they were all thrown into the sea.

Mr. Coffin told me that the adventures of the survivors were by no means over when the *Birkenhead* sank. As the day grew brighter a schooner was seen standing out to sea, and Coffin and seven others manned a small gig which had been saved from the wreck, and pulled after

the schooner. They endeavoured for hours to reach her without avail. Then the strong currents carried them for miles away from the scene of the wreck and they eventually beached their boat in Fish Bay. Owing to the heavy surf the two larger boats were unable to land anywhere near the place where the disaster occurred, and they were eventually rescued by the *Seahorse*, the schooner which Coffin had unsuccessfully pursued. When the vessel was tacking, the topmast of the *Birkenhead* was noticed sticking out of the water, and the course altered towards it, with the result that twenty men who were still clinging to the rigging were saved. The schooner then searched round and picked up the boats referred to.

Coffin and the rest of the crew were some days before they managed to cross the country which lay between their landing-place and Simon's Bay, where the rest of the survivors had been landed from the rescuing vessel.

In the meantime, the list of the survivors had been forwarded to England, so that Coffin and the others who were with him in the gig were for a time mourned among the lost and it was not until the next mail arrived that their friends knew of their arrival.

"EVERY SOUL WAS SAVED"

The Record of a Great Mid-Atlantic Rescue

A brief account of the heroic achievement commemorated in my picture will, I think, be of interest to the present generation. It was probably one of the most marvellous exhibitions of the best qualities of our sailormen that has ever occurred.

In 1890, long before the days of wireless, an emigrant ship, the s.s. *Danmark*, carrying some six hundred steerage passengers, Danes and Swedes, was crossing the Atlantic in bad weather when her shaft broke, causing a heavy leakage and loss of steerage way, leaving the vessel entirely at the mercy of the ocean.

Fortunately for the poor folk on the disabled ship, the s.s. *Missouri*, belonging to the Atlantic Transport Co., and commanded by one Captain Murrel, hove in sight, and the hopeless plight of the emigrant ship was at once realised. Very soon a tow rope had been passed, and the labouring vessel taken in tow. In the heavy seas that obtained, the *Missouri* could make very little progress, but for three long days and nights she struggled with her task. Finally, however, it was found that the leaks in the

Danmark were fast getting the better of her pumps, and it was recognised that there was nothing for it but to remove the emigrants and crew from the ship.

Whether it was that they did not realise the peril they were in aboard the *Danmark*, or were naturally gifted with great courage and fortitude, it is on record that the women went through these three awful days with far less display of terror than did the men, who howled whenever a greater strain than usual came on the tow-rope, thereby causing a shock throughout the ship. No one slept during this time, save the babies, of whom there were many.

All the *Missouri* boats were launched, and presently were making their way towards the doomed ship. It was risky work, indeed, to get the emigrants into the boats, and more so on board the *Missouri*, for although it was not blowing hard there was a very heavy sea running.

Everything was carried out with the greatest judgment and foresight; the first boats contained mostly mothers with their babies—and there were some thirty of the latter, all under seven months of age—and as the *Missouri* was rolling heavily it was impossible to use the accommodation ladder. Captain Murrel, therefore, had to devise means to get them on board. He solved

the problem by attaching a coal basket to a rope and nearly filling it with pillows and blankets, and inserting a broom handle through the top to prevent the babies from falling out on their journey up the side of the ship. This was lowered to the boats and, after being packed with babies, was hauled up with lightning rapidity whenever the ship rolled to leeward.

When the precious freight reached the deck the babies were hurried aft to the cabin and dumped on the floor. There was no time to lose, for besides the crew of the *Danmark* there were still five hundred and seventy passengers to transfer to the *Missouri*, and it was a busy time. As fast as the boats came alongside bowlines were lowered and quickly passed round the passengers' waists, and up they went when the ship rolled their way. Not a life was lost, and there was only one casualty—and that of a half-blind old woman. It took five or six hours strenuous labour to get everyone on board—and during this period part of the crew, assisted later on by male emigrants, were occupied in throwing overboard the cargo of the rescuing vessel, to make room for the rescued people. It was a big risk that the captain took, for he was, of course, responsible to the shippers, but without a moment's hesitation he took this step—

for the *Missouri* was a cargo and cattle ship—with no proper accommodation for passengers.

Captain Murrel told me that he could never understand how the matter of the ownership of the babies in arms was decided, because when they were dumped, as they arrived, on the cabin floor they rolled about helplessly with the movements of the ship, and were hopelessly mixed up. Yet, when the mothers were hauled on board, although they could not speak a word of English, they made him understand without difficulty that their babies must be forthcoming. When they were conducted to the struggling mass they quickly got to work and sorted their own babies out, without a single dispute as to ownership. The captain was, doubtless, in fear and trembling lest he should have to play the rôle of Solomon, but no necessity arose.

When all were on board the ingenuity of the officers and crew of the *Missouri* were taxed to the utmost to settle their visitors. The mate, Mr. Gates, informed me that he slept on his sea chest, with three women occupying the rest of his berth.

With six hundred emigrants for whom they were quite unprepared the captain turned the ship's head round and made for the Cape-de-Verde Islands, where he landed all the unmarried passengers, and took on board provisions

for the remainder, and, as an illustration of his foresight, he secured a vast amount of linen, for the poor people had nothing in the way of clothing but what they stood in.

Therefore did Captain Murrel, a bachelor some six feet two in height and weighing possibly some sixteen or eighteen stone, and Mr. Gates, the mate—who was a married man—set to work cutting out for the women on board to sew. When I jokingly suggested to the captain that the scene would make a good poster for some sewing cotton manufacturer he blushed like a school girl.

Certain events occurred later in connection with the rescue that are interesting, one of which was that the shippers—or owners—of the cargo that was cast into the Atlantic, all in the United States, without an exception refused to advance any claim for compensation, and for a time the captain of the *Missouri* was the most popular man in the States. I am afraid there was some hanky-panky in connection with the sale of the cable with which the towing was done, for it was sold by some of the sailors and cut up to be resold for relics. From what I heard of the business done in this direction the cable must have been about two miles long—and as for the basket in which the babies came on board, the

original basket was sold at a good price—several times, and then one was left over for Madame Tussaud's!

I ought to mention that a coal-basket is quite a large affair, which contains, I think, a couple of hundredweight of coal or more. For the purposes of my picture a friend of mine, one of the heads of a line running to Port Said, at my request had one of these sent up to my studio in St. John's Wood. I do not remember what became of it eventually, probably some enterprising person exported it to the U.S.A. as the real "original" basket, because it was reported in the papers that not only was it in several places in the U.S.A. but also in Madame Tussaud's. Curiosity took me to Marylebone Road to see this latter, and I saw underneath a photo-gravure of my picture of the event (which depicted one of the babies in a veritable orthodox coal-basket) a small Danish basket, which would contain I daresay at least three or four pounds of butter. I presume it perished with the other more genuine relics in the fire that took place a year or so ago.

Many years after the event, happening to be in the north of England, I met Captain Forsyth, the second officer of the *Missouri*, who was in command of the first boat alongside the *Missouri*

laden with mothers and babies. He told me that some years previously, when in Baltimore, he read that my picture " Every Soul was Saved " was on exhibition at an Art Gallery there, and he went with a friend to make the acquaintance of the finished article for which he had posed in its beginning. In front of the picture were a couple of gentlemen who were arguing as to whether it was possible to have taken the emigrants on board the ship in such a sea—and also whether I had indicated on the plates of the ship that the sea was running aft.

Turning round, one of the critics caught sight of Forsyth and his friend, and said, " Excuse me, gentlemen, but I see that you are connected with the sea; perhaps you will be kind enough to settle this little argument for us "—and he then related the criticisms that his companion had passed on the picture. He got a surprise when Forsyth replied that not only had the painter indicated that the ship was lying head to wind, by the sea sliding along the plates aft, but so far as the height of the waves was concerned, he might have made them heavier. " Good gracious," replied the astonished man, " how—but——" glancing at the principal figure in the foremost boat and at the speaker he exclaimed, " Oh, pardon me, I see that you were there."

"Yes," continued Forsyth, "and I was the last man to leave the boat when we had got them all on board, and so much was she rolling with the loss of cargo and the addition of heavy top-weight, that when she rolled to leeward I stepped on to her boat deck from the boat!"

When the picture was on exhibition in England it was extensively advertised as, "Every Soul was Saved, by Thomas M. Hemy," and I had to reply to several letters of congratulation on my change of heart, to the effect that the writers thereof had put the wrong construction on what they had read.

I will wind up my yarn-spinning with an adventure that befell me when I was painting this picture. I needed some studies of heavy seas, and as it was not convenient for me to take a journey half-way to New York and then wait until I came across the effect of sea and sky I wanted, I made my way one morning down to the firm of Lambert Bros., Gracechurch Street, and interviewed the head thereof, as to whether he could give me a trip up to the Tyne in one of their steam colliers, which traded there for black diamonds. "Certainly," he replied, "I've got a couple of my skippers here at the present moment that are sailing there," so with that he called down a tube for them

to be sent up. On entering they proved to be a striking contrast, one of them had close-cropped white hair and beard, the other one fiery red hair and beard. Turning to me my friend said, "Now, Hemy, which one will you sail with, the white or the red 'un." I replied, "That depends on which is the first to sail." "The red 'un," he replied. Then I answered, "'Tis the red one for me."

The next night I made my way down to Limehouse Dock, where I found the vessel, and also that the captain had very kindly given up his berth to me.

Nothing happened going up to the Tyne or returning to the Thames until the Haseboro' Sands were reached. Never a breath of wind we met with, a clock calm all the time, although it was winter time. Nothing that could by any means whatever be tortured into the resemblance of the mighty rollers of the Atlantic came my way.

It was heartrending, but one day I decided, as I could not get sea, I would do a careful study of the steamer's long boat, which was lashed fore and aft on the main hatch. That same night it was nearly completed, and then we ran into a heavy fog; so intense was it that we had to anchor in the vicinity of the dreaded sands. We had plenty of unseen company

there, for all night the screeching of sirens and the sound of ships' bells rung in our ears. There was no sleep for me. When I sat down to breakfast next morning with the mate and second mate,we had got under way, though the fog was still thick, but we were going very slowly. Presently a shudder ran through the vessel accompanied by a crash. "We've done it," said the mate. "That is so," answered the second softly, and rising quickly from the table they coolly looked round for their caps before making for the companion ladder. As for me I was on deck like lightning, and catching sight of the cook at the for'ard lashing of the long boat, I made at once for the after one, and with some assistance we had that boat over the side in a couple of shakes. I had just time to glance for'ard when I reached the deck to glimpse a large barquentine flying past us on the starboard side; her rigging was hanging in festoons and her upper streaks and bulwarks were badly mauled where she scraped our bows. Her crew were running about like a lot of ants whose nest had been stirred. It was but a momentary glance for she disappeared in the fog, and presently for'ard on our forecastle were the mates inspecting our damage—a great hole about a foot above our water line!

Then some of our men jumped into our long boat and went in search of the barquentine, which they found and we managed to get her in tow. Our boat was also being towed in case a sea sprang up and we were sent to the bottom. I could not finish my study, so making the best of matters I painted our "capture," and I still have the unfinished sketch of the boat and the deck of our vessel showing the barquentine astern—and keep it as a memento.

An amusing event occurred during the incident. Whilst the officers were on the forecastle inspecting our damage a fireman emerged from the fo'c'sle door, attired solely in his shirt which fluttered in the light breeze. Taking a couple of steps up the ladder and looking round without saying a word he retired to his berth; enough for him that we were not actually sinking at the moment.

It was a lucky escape for us, for had a very small sea come along we should have gone down like a stone; as it was we had to crawl slowly to reach Gravesend, and it was night before we anchored there.

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